

alive (sororal polygyny) is an awesome idea, for it implies the sororate to them or wish for the death of a present wife. 595

In a few upper class households there are concubines who have the status of female slaves. These act as servants to the wives of the household and are used by the household head as sexual partners "any time you ask," as one informant put it. They are spoken of as being "half a wife." This refers to the fact that the husband gives them one half the amount of everything given to a wife. Generally they are too low in status to compete with the wives of the household unless they are considered exceptionally beautiful, or if they have given birth while the wife has not, and the child is recognized as that of the concubine. One informant very clearly explained his possession of concubines in economic terms. His household, he said, was very large, and he regularly fed twenty to forty people per day. This figure often increased to fifty or sixty on special occasions. The work of preparing so much food on time and regularly was simply too much for his wives; so he always has a number of concubines to help with the catering problems associated with his high status in the community. 595  
596  
597

Why do men want to get married? In answering this question men constantly reiterate cooking, food producing, and child-bearing. Cooking—to the unmarried man—is a most important point. Men never cook and if a man has no wife he must eat his food in the household of a relative or neighbor who is already married. This produces obligations by the unmarried man towards the married men which must be repaid with some service such as farm labor or running messages which signifies subordination. Thus a man with a wife can create obligation among unmarried men or at least avoid becoming obliged in this way to others. This is not, of course, the whole story. Women are also prized for their work in the fields. Indeed men estimate an annual increase or decrease in crop yield by referring, among other things, to the loss or gain of a wife. 581  
582

Women on the other hand want wealth, although they often want freedom as well and more power in marriage than the culture allows for. This leads to trouble. But before we go into marriage itself, let us look at an actual case in which a man decides to marry.

Modu was twenty-six years old. He had been married twice; once for a period of nine months, then divorced and single again, then married a second time for a year and a half. In this he is no different from the vast majority (as high as eighty to ninety percent) of young Kanuri men his age. Now he was single again and living next door to his older-half-brother at whose house he was eating his meals. He wanted to take a wife and become independent of his older brother. He chose a new woman in the village about the same age as himself. She was visiting her elder brother who was a minor official in the district court. Minor though he was, his family was well-to-do and Modu was but a country peasant. The woman was beautiful and rather more sophisticated than local country girls, coming as she did from the city. Modu thought her most attractive in every way, even though gossip had it she had been married six or seven times. 58  
159

Despite the gossip he decided to try and marry her, feeling that her past reputation made her available to the likes of him and not too costly in terms of bride-wealth. Late one afternoon he sent over some kola nuts using an intermediary; often people use old women for such purposes. 587

42 THE FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD

58 often people use old women for such purposes. He was anxious about the gift and  
159 so went to an expert on medicines who gave him a couple of special kola nuts whose  
[832] magical love potion power would direct the woman to find him irresistible. His  
confidence thus buoyed up, he visited her himself and they had a short affair. He  
tasted her cooking, observed her behavior, and after two weeks sent a friend to the  
older brother to arrange for the marriage payments. Three weeks later, after the  
marriage was proposed to the *luwali*, (in this case her older brother), the couple  
were married. Modu was delighted and later assured me that for most of the entire  
six months they remained married he was quite happy. In the end they quarreled  
bitterly because his wife was out of the house visiting much too often for him not  
to be suspicious of her fidelity. Finally he simply told her to pack her things and  
leave his house.

183 The case illustrates the ease with which Kanuri men and women moved in  
586 and out of marriage—a perfectly normal pattern in Bornu. Bornu is a land where  
divorces are very common, and a marriage break-up is never the social and psycho-  
logical catastrophe it can easily be in the west. To understand why we must look  
more closely at Kanuri married life.

### Married Life

512 By comparison with western society, Kanuri husbands are at home a great  
593 deal. The home is the center of activities where men take their leisure, visit their  
512 friends, and receive visitors all day long. If at all possible they carry out their occu-  
pational activities in the household making it the central location for their daily  
work. Such constant contact of husband and wife in the household is rather rare in  
western society. Paradoxically however, husbands and wives are far less intimate  
and friendly than they are in the west. In their daily lives, women cook, nurse  
young children, bring water for the household if there is no well, help in the  
fields, grow garden crops and maize in the back of the compound, prepare cooked  
and uncooked foods, make pots, trade, and visit one another to help with the pre-  
paration of ceremonies as well as for companionship and hairdressing. Men clear the  
fields and plant crops, work at a large number of crafts including modern ones  
such as truck driving or using Singer sewing machines; they also engage in reli-  
gious activities as specialists, and carry out specialized political, judicial and medi-  
cal roles.

513 In upper class families, women are in *purdah* (restricted to the household)  
562 and live at the back of the compound furthest away from its entrance. They leave  
565 the compound only on rare occasions and even then they must seek the permission  
of their husbands well in advance. They are usually accompanied on such excu-  
rsions by servants who may escort the upper class lady half way across the emirate to  
visit her own family for a ceremony at which her presence is required. On the other  
hand, peasant women must go to the well at least twice a day for water, and in  
some villages this means a walk of several miles. These women work on the farm  
plots of the various members of the household during the short growing season  
and sell cooked foods. Ordinary women use the occasions away from their hus-  
band's households to meet and talk freely with other women, and sometimes, of  
course, with other men.

## THE HOUSEHOLD 31

The important point to be made here is that the Kanuri feel that the *bar-zum*<sup>3</sup> or discipline-respect ingredients of the father-son relationship can be transferred. This does not mean that they forget their own fathers who are their biological kin. However it does mean that they use the norms of the father-son relationship for self-advancement or for relating to other people as they would to their father, in return for those things that they obtain traditionally from a father. Kanuri were always coming to me and addressing me as their father, or asking for a small gift in the hope that they might repay me with some discipline and respect and begin initiating a *tada njima* role for themselves with me as their *abba njima*. However, there is more to initiating the role than simply asking me for a gift or doing a service. In order for it to work there must be *aman* or trust. A man must know when he brings a client into his household that he will try to behave like a son. Even then he waits patiently and watches to see how firm and fast the professed loyalty really is. Most Kanuri say that a year is not too long a period to wait while testing out the strength of such a relationship before actually giving the person (the *tada njima*) some real responsibilities from which both the household head and the client might gain.

This means of adding to a household can produce very extensive groupings under the proper conditions. If a man has a powerful political post, either in the traditional or modern post-colonial administration, his activities in trade, farming, tax collection, or adjudication means that he can use a large following of loyal and obedient clients. The transferability of the father-son relationship allows men to build up such organizations whenever they have the means to maintain them. Kanuri judge success in life not by wealth or power per se, but by the size of a man's following. And the best indication of this is the size of the household and those related households over which he has some control. Thus great households, the greatest of which is that of the Shehu of Bornu, form the upper class group of Kanuri society. Wealthy traders have many *tada njima* who, after their loyalty has been proven, are given goods and money to go out and trade for their superiors. Bornu society is such that powerful men, indeed any man wishing to raise his status, require loyal followers and clients who use the ingredients of the father-son relationship to define their interpersonal relations. Certainly many of the people a man may depend upon are members of his own descent group, but kinsmen differ from clients in a number of important respects. Kinsmen may profit not only by one another's success, but through inheritance they also gain by each other's death. Or if a particular prerogative, say access to political office of some kind, resides in one male line, then an office-holder's male relatives may profit from his dismissal since one of them may be considered as a replacement. Furthermore relationships based on descent cannot be broken completely—some mutual dependence always remains—even though a superior dislikes the services of his descent group member who is serving as his subordinate. Clientship is more rational in this respect since clients can in effect be "fired" for poor performance of their duties. Thus clientship, represented by the *tada njima* relationship, is a flexible and useful tool in the building of Kanuri households and even larger social groupings.

Finally it is important to remember that all of these important relationships are basically those within a household. This is the stage upon which family life

<sup>3</sup> The letter *o* is pronounced as the "oo" in "look" or "book."

70 • THE LIFE CYCLE

885 must ask his permission to do anything. To be seen speaking to another man is  
581 grounds for divorce. On the other hand a divorced woman is free. She comes and  
[586] goes as she pleases and speaks to whoever she pleases quite freely. Some women  
quite frankly remark that they prefer this status to that of marriage while others  
just as strongly remark that they would like to get a husband.

885 In summary, maturity is a time of achievement for men in which they be-  
105 come full-fledged members of their community. They marry, try to raise families,  
156 and become heads of successful and productive households. Women try to marry  
562 successfully and hopefully to have children. However, as I have pointed out else-  
182 where, tensions caused by the demands of subordination in their married role pro-  
[578] duce strains and rebelliousness that very often leads to the break-up of marriage.<sup>8</sup>  
men can become successful—through their occupation, their associations with  
neighbors, relatives, friends, and important men, and through membership and  
[592] finally headship of a household. In spite of a turnover in wives associated with the  
high amount of divorce, the household itself is a stable unit, although its personnel  
is not. On the other hand, it is the rare Kanuri woman who can achieve a success-  
ful adulthood. Many women are barren or have had children who have not sur-  
vived. Very few women remain married to the same men all their lives and most  
have had one or more extended periods of being divorced and looking for a hus-  
band. By centering on men and emphasizing their needs and wishes, Kanuri culture  
has produced a strain on women that is a fertile field for changes when moderniza-  
tion produces the possibility of new goals for women and new means for achieving  
them.

### Old Age

886 Old age is signalled in both sexes by the whitening of body hair even  
888 though other body characteristics may remain strong and healthy. For both old men  
[826] and women this last period in life means that many of the obligations and respon-  
sibilities of adult life are slowly relinquished, although men generally feel that they  
belong to the adult roles much longer than women. As heads of households and  
office holders in governmental positions, men wield powers in a number of spheres  
and give these up slowly and reluctantly as old age drains away their energy and  
efficiency. Ideally in Kanuri culture a man should reach the golden years of his life  
in his old age. If all goes well he receives much respect; his work is carried on by  
descendants, and his position as a household head may have grown to the point  
where he is the senior authority among a group of households organized along the  
lines of a patrilocal extended family with clients, sons, brothers, and their wives  
and families looking to him for leadership. When he is very old and becoming  
progressively infirm, he lets many of these duties pass to mature members of the  
group. Even then they always consult him on decisions and pay heed to his wishes.

888 The reality in Kanuri society is often far from the ideal although the ideal is a  
183 very widely agreed upon goal. To obtain this most desirable position in old age a  
563

<sup>8</sup> See Ronald Cohen, "Marriage instability among the Kanuri of Northern Nigeria," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 63, 1231-1249.

man must have had a very successful life and belong to the upper ranks of society where power and wealth give him the opportunity to build up the necessary following during his lifetime. Peasants can achieve the ideal if they have through accident or a successful career been able to build up political and economic resources that enable them to maintain a growing compound. For those men who cannot obtain a position of semi-independent leadership in their old age, there is also the possibility of membership in someone else's organization. In this way a man can look forward to a secure position even though his own household as part of it is a very small one. For many other men old age brings neither leadership nor successful subordination. A son, friend, or neighbor may regularly help with the farm plot, or if less successful the man and perhaps an aging wife live alone in a small compound in their village. He is given some general respect as an older person. If he lives in the same community as his children there may be young grandchildren constantly around, and whether they live in the same community or not he may be fostering one of more grandchildren in his compound. Whatever the alternative, and unlike our own society, old age even at its poorest provides an accepted and respected place for old men.

Many old women after a number of divorces or the death of a husband with whom they have lived for many years do not or cannot marry again. This does not seem to be the case nearly so often for the men. If the woman has a son, he is expected to keep her in his compound which may have been the compound of her husband. If she has no son, she may stay in or near the compound of some other relative, including an ex-husband whom she refers to by using the kin term applied to "brother."<sup>4</sup> I have seen a few old women living alone in the compound of their dead husbands although, like old men, most of these seemed in constant touch with young children. Whether or not she is being supported economically by her relatives, any old woman in the lower ranks of society has an accepted role as a small retail seller who sits daily in front of the compound or small market stalls around the town, or near a well, selling a few ground-nuts, sundries, cooked food, or tobacco flowers for staining the teeth of women. Four old women in Magumeri, one of whom lived completely alone, had saved up money to buy themselves a native well, and these four supported themselves on a fairly steady income from the sale of the water. Such practices are not suddenly started; a woman raises extra cash throughout her entire life by petty trade or the sale of cooked foods and with the onset of old age she merely extends these activities into a full-time occupation.

Women from higher ranking households remain in the compounds of their sons or relatives. Very likely they have been secluded as young married women and this continues in their old age. The widow of a high-ranking man is on occasion supported in his compound by the heir to the household. However, if the new household head has his own aging mother alive, then it is more common for the widow to leave her dead husband's household and return to her own kin since her co-wife is now taking over the position of mother of the head of the household. Many of these upper class women have more capital than their lower class counterparts. This started with their dowry and may have been increased through inheritance and trade since the time of their youth. Such trade is carried

<sup>4</sup> The Kanuri use a single kin term to refer to brother, sister, cousins of any kind, and half brothers and sisters, although each of these can be distinguished if need be.

72 THE LIFE CYCLE

888 on by intermediaries because of the seclusion common among upper class women.  
• 565 If the activity has proven successful during their life it is carried on into old age,  
589 and if not then it is dropped. Thus old women, like men, in Bornu have a place in  
[434] society. It is not generally a position of great authority, although there are some  
[788] notable exceptions. Certainly, however, deference and respect for the aged is a uni-  
versal feature of good Kanuri manners. Blessing the young is a cultural symbol of  
this respect. Old people bless young people when the latter go on trips or there is  
some special event such as a birth or the naming of a new baby. The seriousness  
with which such blessings are given and received is evidence of the importance  
placed on the special capacities of wisdom and propriety that the Kanuri associate  
with old age.

Death

761 Just as pregnancy marks the potential beginning of life, so death marks the  
end. The Kanuri have a quiet accepting attitude toward death; it is unpleasant, but  
it is always there. The high mortality rate for children, and the desirability that as  
many as possible in a community attend a funeral means that Kanuri adults attend  
many more of these ceremonies than people in western society. Thus death and fu-  
nerals are much more commonly noted and accepted than in the United States  
where the entire subject is considered repugnant.

764 The Kanuri believe that going to funerals helps the deceased person to  
775 achieve paradise. The more prayers said by as many people as possible and as many  
621 religious leaders as possible, then the better are the chances of success. Indeed this  
is not only true in death but throughout life. People go to a particular funeral be-  
cause the deceased was "a man of our town," or they attend one in another locality  
because the person was a relative or a friend. Not to go, even to the funeral of a  
very low status person of one's own village, is unthinkable. A high ranking official  
of Magumeri remarked at a funeral of a poor, very old, butcher that only twenty  
years ago he would not have shaken the hand of such a man, but times have  
changed. However, when asked whether he would have attended such a man's fu-  
neral in former times he looked incredulous; there could be no question about it if  
they were of the same community. Thus death ties a community together and ex-  
presses one's membership in it. No matter what other differences may exist between  
people, there is one occasion when the only criterion for active participation is a  
common residence in the same locality.

764 The compulsion to go to funerals is very strong. Thus a young woman who  
621 teaches in the Bornu secondary school system and is highly westernized in many of  
her attitudes told me that she had to go to a funeral about 100 miles away in the  
bush. This involved very uncomfortable travel by lorry, then a long horseback ride  
in the rainy season. However, she never once considered the possibility that she  
might not attend even though there was every likelihood she would miss the cere-  
mony. Her relatives were having a funeral—therefore she must go; there was no  
choice although she preferred not to go.

764 Kanuri burial ceremonies themselves are held as close to the first morning  
after death as is possible. I observed only one exception to this rule; a very old man

182 • THE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

As in the example above there is a tendency for the district heads to appoint younger brothers to the post of lawan within their own districts. However this has its limits. In one case a lawan confidentially asked the British officials if he could be moved to a district away from the hegemony of his older brother, the district head. That same year (1935) there were a great many complaints by the peasants directed to British officials about the harshness of this particular district head's administration. He was warned but did not comply and was later dismissed. The younger brother sensed that trouble was brewing for the older brother and decided it would be more advantageous to his own career if he could move to another district and not get caught up in the difficulties his brother was creating by his lack of good administration. One district head remarked that he had tried to appoint his own brother in a previous district as lawan, but the young man had done a very bad job and it proved impossible for the district head to control him. The younger brother was finally deposed by the emirate government after his older brother was transferred to a new district. Later he came to his older brother in the latter's new district, hoping for another job as lawan in his brother's administration. However the older brother has no intention of doing so because, as he says, this younger brother is a bad man who oppresses his villagers when he gets a chance and this reflects back on the district head. Thus in Bornu the loyalty of brothers is ameliorated in the political system by the requirements of office.

As we have already noted, local representatives of the various Bornu Native Authority (emirate government) departments are stationed in the district capitals. These include people like the district chief scribe who keeps the books on revenue collection, the district judge, the school teachers, some native authority policemen, veterinary, forestry, and agricultural department representatives and so on. The list varies in length from district to district, but there is a general tendency for it to lengthen through time as the departments expand their programs and services. These officials are paid salaries and live in the district capital although they often get shifted from one district to another. Thus only one of these officials in Magumeri had been there for longer than four years and almost all of them had lived in at least three district capitals during the past ten years. They view themselves as a class apart from the local people; they are city bred or at least city educated; they share a common interest in state and national politics; and their mobility orients them to each other rather than to people outside the civil service. When asked who their best friends are they invariably mention other members of the emirate's civil service. Thus they form a class of urban cosmopolitans on the rural scene.

Their relations to the district head are complex and in some ways similar to that of the district head to his lawans when these latter are appointees of a previous district head. The native authority official is not necessarily a follower of the district head, and he does have a separate salary. Usually the official and the district head maintain a respectful but carefully measured social distance from one another. The local officials are often asked to eat at the compound of the district head which emphasizes their common urban upper-class membership and separateness as a group from the rural population. However, they generally do not become members of the district head's following. They have their own careers to follow, and though friendship with the district head is useful, it could also impede their success because of demands made upon them by the district head which might conflict with those of their own departmental superiors in the capital.

106 · THE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

643 bodied in his title, "commander of the faithful," and is expressed ritually in a number of ways. Thus at the feast celebrating the end of Ramadan (the annual Muslim fast), a special ram of the Shehu is killed by the chief religious leader of the state. No one considering himself a citizen of the emirate and a subject of the Shehu is supposed to kill his own ram for the feast day until the royal ceremony is completed.

643 At all annual festivals and state occasions, and every Friday to a lesser extent, the Shehu is attended at his palace by his court and representatives of the people. The court includes members of the royal family, title holders, the Native Authority council members, and any district heads who may be in the capital or their city representatives who sit outside the royal courtroom. Into the royal presence come representatives of each Native Authority department, representatives of the religious leaders of the community, a sample of school children, leaders and representatives of the various occupational groupings under their own headmen. Each group gives symbolic pledges of loyalty and obedience to the throne by saying prayers for the health and welfare of the monarch and the state. The people, including the nobles, go down on their knees to the monarch, stand when he stands, remove their shoes in his presence, and speak to him only indirectly using terms of reverence and respect.

64 It is difficult to assess what real power the Shehu has in the emirate government. The present incumbent is a very old man, and for the last decade or so the bulk of administrative affairs have been handled by the Native Authority Council under the direction of the Waziri. Whether this now indicates a trend toward constitutional monarchy or whether a new, younger and more vigorous Shehu would reassert the power of the throne is a question that is fascinating but at present not capable of being answered. Certainly the Native Authority Council and the various departments under the council are new and growing powers in the contemporary society, but the district heads are formally responsible to the Shehu. Since the district heads are still very powerful members of the political system, a new Shehu could conceivably affect policy and the administration of the emirate very considerably through his influence on these men and their appointments. It is also very possible that he would influence the Native Authority Council itself and appointments to that body. Potentially the office is a very powerful one, and it seems unlikely that its power will diminish in future since the instruments of power are available to anyone occupying the throne who wishes to use them.

647  
[631]  
[648] The main business of government of the emirate is handled on a day-to-day basis in the Native Authority departments, which are coordinated with similar departments in other emirates of the province under the Bornu Provincial Government which in its turn looks to the Regional Government of Northern Nigeria for policy directives that are regional in scope.

647  
463  
829  
[365]  
[197] The personnel of the Native Authority departments form what has come to be called a new class in the society. They are salaried bureaucrats who work in offices and generally have some form of western education. They wear wrist watches, read English and vernacular newspapers, listen to the radio for both local, national, and international news, go to political meetings, join civil service associations, and think of themselves as urban even when they are stationed in the rural

1: Cohen

MS14 Kanuri MS14

466

• 565

566

557

/For client-patron relationships (tada njima), see category 571./

175  
439 formerly been in control of the great trans-Saharan trade routes which brought the products of Negro Africa into the European world, the European nations had established direct trading relations with the coastal peoples by the beginning of the sixteenth century and the importance of the trans-Saharan trade began to dwindle. As trade with the north declined in importance, the Sudanese empires founded on this trade were no longer able to maintain themselves.

175 The empire of Bornu, however, continued to exist though much smaller in size. A new capital, Kukawa, was built near [643] the shores of Lake Chad. The ancient Sef dynasty, whose 'Mals' (kings) had ruled since the beginning of the empire, was replaced by the family of El Kanemi, the Kanembu leader who had [354] been instrumental in driving out the Fulani. The title of [362] Shehu (Sheikh) replaced that of Mai. Within Bornu proper a [423] feudal system existed. Titled nobility were given huge tracts of land by the Shehu. Though these lords lived in Kukawa, the capital, they collected taxes and otherwise administered their lands.

175  
648 The weakened empire was unable to resist a final attack, this time from the east. Rabeh, leader of a renegade army from the Sudan which had failed in an attempted revolt there, overran Bornu in 1893. He, in turn, was killed by the French in 1900. In 1902 British forces entered Bornu, and reestablished the line of the Shehus which had been broken by Rabeh's occupation. The British then ruled in Bornu through the considerably altered organization of the former empire. The Shehu of Bornu,

175  
648

178 though there have always been people who walked or rode donkeys.  
788  
556 The modern pilgrimage is usually made by truck, or by chartered  
441 plane from Maiduguri to Mecca. A wealthy man, and this usually  
[509] means someone engaged in trade, can travel to Mecca and back by  
plane for the sum of 120 pounds sterling.

#### 4. The Social System.

177 Many of the political and economic changes brought about  
178 by the increasing integration of Kanuri culture within the great-  
er orbit of Western culture have resulted in further internal  
changes within Kanuri life. These are clearly manifested in  
the shifting patterns of the social structure of modern Kanuri  
175 society. At the time of the empire, before European contact,  
565 the aristocracy was a clearly defined social class whose mem-  
bership exercised political power, controlled available sources  
of wealth, and enjoyed the prestige deriving from nobility of  
[554] family. These characteristics were unified and symbolized in a  
title conferred upon a man by the Shehu and inherited in a gen-  
565 eral sense, along with wealth and political office. Many of  
178 these wealthy and powerful aristocratic families continue to  
exist today, and most of the District Heads and other important  
political figures are members of such families.

Although the controlling leadership of Kanuri society to-  
day can still be traced directly to the aristocracy of former  
times and still bears many of its characteristics, the system  
is no longer as stable and as self-perpetuating as it formerly

178 was. The changes noted above have made important inroads in  
565 the social system. For many political appointments Western  
[555] education has become a necessary requirement, and although many  
[871] educated people still come from the aristocracy, commoners too  
may become educated, may even excel in the schools and receive  
jobs of political importance as a result of their scholastic ac-  
[866] complishments. Along with modern education, election by direct  
vote in the urban areas has allowed commoners to move directly  
into politics, as members of the House of Assembly in Kaduna.  
This has been of little significance until very recently, but  
it represents a mechanism disruptive of the traditional social  
system. Lastly, the newly risen wealthy class, of non-aristo-  
cratic origin, has been able to take over, in some small measure,  
characteristics of the aristocracy through the use of their  
[556] wealth. Since they are able to afford to make the pilgrimage,  
they benefit from the prestige accruing from being an Alhaji.  
[662] They also benefit directly from giving money to political parties  
and thereby gain political power.

178 The opening up of new avenues toward wealth, prestige, and  
554 political power, the characteristics of the old aristocracy,  
565 has resulted in an increasing number of individuals of commoner  
family who have been able to achieve these goals. In recent  
years such individuals have been rewarded by having important  
[645] titles conferred on them by the Shehu. Members of the Shehu's  
Council who did not come from aristocratic families have been  
[431] granted noble titles. This process has been furthered by the

178 added feature that large sums of money must be distributed when  
• 565 a man receives a title. Thus changes in the meaning and value  
554 of noble titles have accompanied the changing position of the  
431 aristocracy in the social structure of Kanuri society.

##### 5. Material Changes.

178  
494 A number of material changes have been introduced which have also had important ramifications. The first of these is the communications system. Nowadays trucks go everywhere, carrying people and produce, tying remote towns to the cities, fostering trade, and allowing a much greater amount of individual mobility than existed in former times. Often the trucks pioneered the roads, beating down the bush in order to reach a village and carry out the peanuts, and thereby creating a  
[553] road which would later be maintained as such. The roads are maintained by the Provincial Public Works Department, under a  
178  
312  
[603] Provincial Engineer. The Public Works Department is also in charge of rural water supply which is responsible for the digging of new wells. Since the productivity of the region is a  
[361] function of available water, the digging of new wells has led to the founding of new villages in sparsely populated areas. A secure and good year-round water supply is necessary for a thriving village. In addition, Fulani herdsmen, always an asset to  
[563]  
[651] the local economy and a good source for local taxation, will be attracted to new watering places for their cattle. Trucks, roads, and wells have had important effects on the way of life

El Kanemi brought

175 with him a group of Kanembu and Shuwa nobles, who formed the  
643 nucleus, along with their men, of the army which drove back  
• 565 the Fulani invaders of Bornu. These noble Kanembu families  
177 remained in Bornu and adopted Kanuri culture. El Kanemi built  
the new capital of Bornu at Kukawa, and his son Shehu Omar  
175 ruled from Kukawa. The empire of Bornu had declined greatly  
178 from its zenith in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth  
565 centuries, and the Fulani attacks were both a sign of its weak-  
ness and an additional factor in furthering the decline. In  
form, however, the empire remained much the same. Many of the  
old families who had been aristocrats under the Mals retained  
175 their titles, their lands and their position. The new noble  
177 Kanembu and Shuwa families that had followed el Kanemi were  
565 given Kanuri titles and entered the social system as Kanuri  
aristocracy. In time, they accepted Kanuri culture, accord-  
ing to accepted procedures of assimilation which are well un-  
derstood by the Kanuri and apply to conquerors and conquered  
alike, to slaves and to freemen.

175 The Shehu and his court ruled in Kukawa. Members of the  
644 royal family were given large tracts of land, including many  
565 villages, and from their lands they took money for taxes paid  
631 to the central government and for their own uses. In like fash-  
423 ion, the nobility, who were the commanders of army regiments  
[65] and holders of high titles, had their lands and villages. These  
were the chimas. Even religious leaders, such as the Imam, were  
given land. The nobles who were chimas, continued to live in

175  
565  
631

175 Kukawa while their slaves and subordinates administered their  
• 565 lands and collected taxes. Slaves of the Shehu could them-  
631 selves be chimas, and in fact some of the highest titles--  
[567] those of Kaigama (a general of the army), and Mastrema (a  
[554] eunuch) were reserved for slaves of the Shehu.

175 The "knights" of the Shehu were titled lords, who served  
631 as his kabuna. Each lord also had his own kabuna, who vowed  
565 allegiance directly to him. The kabuna of the lord actually  
567 administered his lands while he lived in the capital. Many of  
them were his slaves, but just as slaves of the Shehu could  
themselves be powerful nobles, so too slaves of a lord who  
were his kabuna were powerful individuals in the villages under  
[632] the jurisdiction of their lord. From his kabuna the lord se-  
[622] lected the most trustworthy and rewarded them by having them  
appointed town heads (Lowan), or to a lesser extent village  
heads (Bulama). The Lowan of a town was directly involved in  
administering his town, in adjudicating disputes/through arbi-  
tration and in collecting the property tax (harali).

634 It was said that the chima was almost the absolute author-  
173 ity in his lands. If he saw a horse that he wished to have or  
642 a woman whom he admired, he could have them simply by indicat-  
ing that he wanted to possess them. No man would refuse him  
directly. However, if reports came to the Shehu that a chima  
[643] was acting irresponsibly the Shehu could reprimand the man,

175 and could even remove his title from him. Any man could ap-  
643 peal directly to the Shehu for justice. The power of the Shehu  
642

671  
779  
692

and here the spirit of the Koran is the guide to proper behavior.

[171]

In the area of formal law, the Kanuri follow the same legal school prevalent throughout the Western Sudan--the Maliki legal school. Maliki law covers criminal law, rules of evidence, procedure, sentencing, property rights, contracts between individuals, law of marriage and divorce, inheritance and numerous other areas. Formal courts exist in Bornu, presided over by Kanuri Alkalis, or judges. The Alkali begins his training, like so many Kanuri boys, by study of the Koran with a Malam. He completes his training, at present, in the Legal School at Kano. Islamic law in Northern Nigeria falls within the general area of "Native Law and Custom."

### 3. Education.

871  
779

Education, as the Kanuri understand it, means studying the Koran. From about the age of six, both boys and girls are

[463]

sent to a Malam to learn to pray. Every village has someone who can perform this minimum function, but only the towns have

[562]

Malams. It is sufficient for a girl to memorize the prayers,

• [565]

and most boys proceed no further. However, parents who have greater aspirations for their sons, generally sons from upper class homes, will send their sons to live in the house of a Malam and study with him. Occasionally boys who show aptitude in their studies will be sent on to a more important Malam to continue their studies. Under the tutelage of the Malam, the

876  
779

369 characteristics of the folk society; individuals are specialists  
632 of one sort or another; the towns are centers of government at  
121 the district level; and stratification rather than social homogeneity characterizes their populations. In this sense it is important to distinguish between Kanuri culture in its urban manifestations and Kanuri culture in the rural villages. These two types of community exemplify two concomitant variants of Kanuri culture. Since there is no sharp line of demarcation indicating at which point a village turns into a town, the distinctions made here are seen to shade imperceptibly into one another. At their extremes, however, the differences are considerable.

621 Probably the bulk of the populace live in villages of less  
[622] than 1,000 people. A Lowan, or more typically a Bulama in the smaller village, is the appointed political head of the village.

[463] There is little or no specialization, and everybody farms and depends entirely on the products of his agricultural labors.

[622] The Bulama lives at the same level as the rest of the village. He may own a horse, and his household may be slightly larger,

• [565] but he works in the fields as does everyone else. One man may be slightly wealthier than his neighbor, and may own several sheep and goats, but social classes do not exist. Villages are

[595] divided into compounds, within which a family lives. By and

[592] large, men in the villages have but a single wife, and she and

342 her children will live within the compound walls. In the villages, the compound walls are of woven mats (sagdi). The houses are almost entirely of the round-walled, thatched-roof type.

342 This is one of two house types which the Kanuri build, and is predominant in the villages. There are several variants of this house type. The walls may be of mud bricks, or they may be of woven mats. The first is of course more permanent. Paths separate groups of compounds, and larger streets divide the village. Trees are allowed to grow within the village to provide shade, but other vegetation is removed. Since Bornu is a flat plain, the huts of the small villages, amid the shade trees, jut out from the surrounding cleared landscape in dry season and are visible from a distance.

632 The towns are market centers, and frequently also administrative centers. Towns of some size are divided into wards, and each ward will have its own lowan. The wards (nguro) are in turn made up of compounds. In the towns, stratification in the social structure is pronounced and wealth differences between heads of families may be great. This is reflected in size of compound and in house type. While the house type and compound of the poor commoner (talaka) in the town may be identical with that of the typical villager (compound walls made of sagdis enclosing a plot on which is built a single round-walled thatched hut), the compounds of wealthy and important men are enclosed in walls of mud bricks some ten feet high, and the single entrance (chinna) may be framed in an impressive archway. The area of the compounds of important men may be several thousand square yards, and there may be upwards of twenty houses within. The predominant house type of the wealthy man in the

632 town is a square flat-roofed house built entirely of mud bricks,  
565  
342 with an adobe veneer and turreted roof decoration.  
586

361 Blocks of contiguous compounds, with their entrance-ways facing out onto the streets, make up clusters which are similar to a city block. Streets are laid out on a grid pattern, [363] some narrow and others wide thoroughfares. There is little [492] vehicular traffic, but there is a fair amount of traffic made up of camels and donkeys used as pack animals, and men on horses.

632 Wards may have different characters, especially in large  
[563] towns with non-Kanuri populations, where different ethnic groups will all cluster in one ward. Wards are also often sub-divided [463] into neighborhoods. These take their character from a particular type of craft localized in a neighborhood, or a single group of tradesmen dealing in the same commodity whose compounds are found located in one neighborhood.

632 Every Kanuri town is built around a central plaza called  
361 the dandal. The dandal is a cleared area running east to west, faced with compounds and various public buildings on its north and south sides. The western border is frequently open. At the eastern end, with the dandal stretching out before it, is the entranceway to the compound of the Lowan or Ajia, the focal point of a Kanuri town. The entranceway of the Lowan or Ajia's [644] compound always faces west, into the setting sun. The palace of the Shehu in Maiduguri (the Shehuri) fronts on the great dandal; at its far end is one of the gates of the city.

000

Two other foci of the Kanuri town are the market-place and

586 with ease. Since most men marry a number of times in the course  
587 of a normal life, they are likely to marry women who have been married previously and whose earlier marriage (or marriages) has ended in divorce. An important distinction is made between a marriage with a girl who has never been married before, and marriages with women who have been married previously.

585 a) Marriage with a virgin. The adult Kanuri woman wears  
302 her hair in a striking coiffure which resembles a Trojan helmet. Adolescent girls who have not yet married wear their hair in totally different fashion. Their hair-do is divided into three parts, and they are referred to as kala yaska, a term for their particular developmental stage which derives from the hair-do that characterizes the stage. Since very high priority is placed on virginity for a girl before marriage, a first marriage with a kala yaska is equivalent to marriage with a virgin.

584 Marriages are frequently arranged, but consent of both boy and girl plays a part, even in marriages in which the boy is marrying for the first time and the girl is a kala yaska. A boy may come to his father to say that he likes a particular girl. It frequently happens then that the boy's father will go to the house of the father of the girl, bringing presents with him, to arrange the marriage. The father of the boy may also select a particular girl as wife for his son, ask the boy if he likes the girl, then make the arrangements with the father of the girl. A talaka may marry the daughter of a very good family, if he can raise the money needed for her bride-price. The sole

• [565]

- 48 -

584 obstacle to such a marriage is the bride-price, which will be  
565 high for a daughter of a good family. The father of a boy of  
good family, conversely, may arrange to have his son marry the  
daughter of a talaka if he likes the girl, particularly if she  
is very pretty. A talaka will not usually arrange for the mar-  
riage of his son with the daughter of a very rich man (a wealthy  
trader, for example), because the girl will eventually inherit  
wealth and her husband will have no claim to it, nor will the  
boy's father ever see any of it. However, a talaka father may  
584 arrange for his son to marry the daughter of a kantuoma (aris-  
565 tocrat) family in order for his son to benefit from his future  
557 father-in-law's influence in obtaining power, though the boy's  
own father will not himself directly benefit from the marriage.

581 The qualities desired in a kalD yaska spouse are as fol-  
lows: a pretty girl is highly desirable in marriage; a girl  
with a nasty temper, one who curses people or has other unde-  
sirable personality characteristics (such as shamelessness--  
nunou ba) will not find a husband so easily. A pretty girl is  
better than a wealthy one, but better still is industriousness  
and willingness to work hard. Being able to cook well is also  
more important than beauty. If the father of a boy has two  
girls to choose from as brides for his son, one pretty and the  
other industrious and skillful, he will prefer the industrious  
584 one for his son. If a girl does not like the boy suggested for  
her by her father, if she thinks him ugly, the marriage will not  
take place. The father of the girl will ask her if she likes the

592 Relationships within the household are patterned after kinship  
[602] relations, and kinship terminology is used in referring to these relations, but kinship is not the basis for establishing these relationships in the first place. The household is a corporate group, in that its membership is clearly defined, it operates with common interests of the group in mind, and the household group is itself structured and dependent upon the fulfillment of mutual obligations. In this sense, the household group among the Kanuri is functionally very similar to the corporate kin group in a society with unilineal descent.

The household is made up of all those individuals living within compound walls; the physical definition of the compound  
[594] corresponds to the social unit of the household. A household may be as small as two people--husband and wife, and in a statistical sense the commonest type of household is made up of the nuclear family. It was noted that in the small villages wealth differences between various members of a village were slight, and consequently polygamy tends to be rare. It follows, too, that under those circumstances the household is small, usually no larger than the nuclear family. In the larger towns, households may be very large, since households vary directly in size with the wealth and social class of the household head. Many of the factors which enter into the growth of a man's household concern the system of social stratification among the Kanuri. Some indication of the nature of social

592

369

565

[595]

592 stratification among the Kanuri has been given, but more extend-  
• 565 ed discussion will be reserved for a later point.  
369

351 To this point the compound has been described as an area  
392 enclosed by walls, with a single entrance gate. Each compound  
has as its head an adult married male, referred to as the master  
of the house (komanza fatobe). The compound is divided into  
forak (literally meaning wide or open area) and sagasa (narrow  
area). Each wife has her own sagasa, and the master of the  
house may, in addition, have a house of his own. The open area,  
or forak, is the open communal area, and servants, retainers  
and slaves, with their wives and children, may live there.

592 Since the family as a unit has been described above, and  
it was also noted that occasionally elderly parents are taken  
in by their married sons or daughters, other categories of in-  
dividuals who may be found as part of a household will now be  
described.

592 Slaves are a part of the household, but since only royalty  
567 (ngalwo) or aristocracy possess slaves, most of the population  
[565] do not have slaves as a part of their households. Those heads  
of families who do own slaves normally count their slaves in  
the hundreds. Few of these become part of the household of  
their owners. Male slaves are a part of their master's house-  
hold only if their own families performed duties within the  
household of their master; most slaves today live on the lands  
of their former masters, far from the household of their pres-  
ent master. Neither master nor slave, under such circumstances,

592 particularly acknowledges the relationship between them, unless  
567 the slave should be in the direct presence of the man who he  
knows is his master. However, the relationship between master  
and slave determines the behavior of both at all times, when  
592 the slave is part of his master's household. A female slave  
567 may be chosen as a concubine (chir) by her master. She then  
595 becomes part of his household. Though a man may have no more  
than four wives, he may have any number of concubines. A chir  
enters into a special class of concubines when she becomes a  
murshe. She is then given a house of her own, and has a distinct  
legal status, slightly different from that of a wife, but with  
its own strictly defined rights and obligations. Like a wife,  
a murshe must have her own house. A husband spends one night  
with a murshe, and two with a wife, in regular rotation. How-  
ever, here the husband has an option--he may spend no more than  
one night with each murshe, but if angry at a particular one,  
he may pass her by. The murshe prepares the master's food on  
the day when it is her turn to sleep with him, just as a wife  
would do. She also shares in all the economic tasks which fall  
to the woman in a household.

592 The household of aristocracy, therefore, may include slaves,  
567 both male and female. Male slaves (kalya) may be young boys  
565 and youths who live in the forok area of the compound, or they  
may be married men who live with their own nuclear families in  
areas of the compound allotted to them, and are included, along  
with their families, as part of the master's household. Female

592 slaves living within the compound as part of the household may  
567 be children or young girls, or they may be chirs. Murshe who  
• 565 bear children are freed by virtue of being the mother of their  
[428] master's child, though they remain murshe. Such a child inher-  
its equally with children borne to a wife.

592 At present there are many powerful and wealthy household  
556 heads who are not members of the aristocracy or royalty. These  
565 men, though they do not own slaves, are important men in the  
larger towns, and their households reflect their wealth and  
592 their social importance. Included as part of their household  
597 may be children who have been given to them and are their adopted  
sons. Children are frequently given by their parents to indi-  
viduals in other households, where they grow up. There are two  
types of 'giving': a child may be given to a close relative,  
such as to one's childless brother or to one's mother, whose  
children are all grown and whose house is now empty. A man  
blessed with many children of his own will give a child to a  
592 relative. Another sort of giving involves naming the child  
597 after an important man (the child's chibuna). The chibuna then  
557 has the option of asking for the child after it is weaned, or  
[653] later, so that the child will grow up in his household as his  
adopted son. A child growing up as part of an important man's  
household will have many possibilities open to him, possibili-  
ties not available to the common man. The parents make the  
initial choice when they name the child, indicating that they  
would wish their son to grow up in his chibuna's household. The

592 important man then exercises his choice by asking for the child  
597 should he observe it to be bright and attractive, or neglecting  
557 to ask should he for some reason not want the child. The child  
is usually given at the time of weaning. If the child is given  
to his chibuna, he does not return to visit his real parents,  
as there is shame (nungu) involved, though he will not call his  
adopted parent "my mother", or "my father." A man treats his  
adopted son (his chibuna--a reciprocal term) just as he would  
[428] treat his own son. However, the boy does not inherit from his  
[583] chibuna. The head of the household does supply his adopted son  
with a bride-price when he marries.

557 Many boys are named after nobles, after Lowans and Ajjas.  
592 Some of these chibuna are taken into the aristocratic household,  
597 though a good many are not and grow up in their true father's  
565 household. Certain talaka household heads have become very  
wealthy in the recent years, and have three or even four wives  
and very large households. Neighbors and acquaintances may  
name their sons after these men, who may then take their young  
chibuna into their household. It is clear, therefore, that size  
and composition of one's household is related to the old system  
of social stratification (royalty, aristocracy, talaka, slaves),  
since slaves are part of the household of both royalty and aris-  
[178] tocracy. It is also related to the rise of new classes of peo-  
ple, as a result of changing economic and political conditions,  
and this can be seen in the giving of children to household heads  
who are themselves talaka, but have become powerful and wealthy.

614 is Shetima Mastafa, the Ajia of Kukawa. The head of the Kanem-  
178 bu Tamagari, is Alhaji Mai Manga of N'Guigmi, in Niger, not in  
[64] Nigeria. When Alhaji Mai Manga was appointed chief of his re-  
[64] gion by the French authorities the Shehu of Bornu, in British  
Nigeria, sent him a gown (kulugu) as his mark of office. It  
was necessary for him to obtain the traditional approval of the  
[563] Shehu before he could be accepted by the populace. The heads  
of Shuwa and Fulani jilis are given kulugus by the Shehu, which  
indicates the political nature of the jili, or sib. However,  
the heads of the Kanuri jilis today have no functions whatso-  
ever. People come to pay them respect (noogana) as a result of  
their position, but this is all that remains attached to the po-  
sition.

#### F. The System of Social Stratification.

175  
• 565 The old Kanuri system of social stratification recognized  
four distinct social classes. These were royalty (ngalwo),  
aristocracy (kantuoma), commoners (talaka), and slaves (kalya).  
One can distinguish four separate variables, which, when taken  
together, determine the social importance of any category of  
individuals. These are: power, wealth, respect, and free-  
birth; among the Kanuri they can serve as criteria for determin-  
ing the rank of a social class, or of a single individual with-  
in a class.

121 Power is a quality which can be used to define a social  
61 relationship, and which derives from the political structure  
66  
565

121 of a society. In societies where the state as an institution  
61 does not exist, political structure is either coterminous with  
66 kinship structure, or there is close co-ordination between the  
• 565 two. In the case of the Kanuri, the separate and distinct administrative organization which serves as the framework of the political structure,<sup>1</sup> implies a lessening of the role of kin groups to the point where they have disappeared among the Kanuri. Aside from relationships within the nuclear family, and to a lesser extent kinship relations generally, power derives its authority, among the Kanuri, from one's position in the political system, and the ability of one man to exert power over another is determined by the roles which the two men play in the political system.

121 Wealth as a variable used to determine the social importance of a single individual or of a category of individuals is analogous to power. Relative wealth defines a relationship between two individuals or two classes of individuals, and just as power derives from one's role in the political system, wealth derives from one's role in the economic system. In most primitive societies, the economic system is submerged within kinship and within the operation of kin groups. In some, the market has begun to emerge as a separate economic institution and increasingly social relationships are defined in terms of the market.

---

1. the distinctions made here as to types of political systems are taken from the Introduction to African Political Systems, edited by Meyer Forres and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, (London: Oxford University Press, 1940).

• 565  
556 The Kanuri have long had markets and used money, but the use of  
436 money is limited to certain spheres of Kanuri culture. Money  
437 is used primarily as a medium for the exchange of goods. Its  
[425] use has just begun to be extended to certain types of land, as  
noted above, but not all land can be freely bought and sold.

46 Similarly, a man's labor is not usually hired according to  
536 Kanuri custom. Wealth, therefore, can be acquired through eco-  
565 nomic activities in the market, but the means for doing this  
are largely limited to the exchange of goods at a profit. A  
man cannot acquire greater wealth by using his previously ac-  
quired wealth to buy land, and then use the land which he has  
bought to further increase his wealth. Nor can he directly ex-  
ploit the labor of other men by paying a cheap price for labor,  
and selling the products resulting from the labor of others at  
a profit. Labor, as explained in the section on the Kanuri  
46 household, is what one must do for one's household head; the  
586 head in return must provide for household members in various  
592 ways. Sheer accumulation of greater and greater wealth would  
565 not be possible, since the household head must constantly ex-  
pend his resources to maintain his social position and to sat-  
isfy the expectations of the members of his household.

554 Respect or prestige (Kanuri: borzəm or dareja) is a qual-  
565 ity assigned to different positions in a society according to  
the cultural values of that society. Individuals of high pres-  
tige are expected to behave in certain ways, and failure to do

565  
554  
564  
577  
792  
563

so results in loss of esteem.<sup>1</sup> A pious and god-fearing man, among the Kanuri, will have earned the respect of his neighbors so long as he continues to behave in that fashion. On the other hand, a Malam of the Koran is respected because he belongs to a category of individuals which has high prestige in Kanuri society. Knowing that he is a Malam, people will treat him with respect. Should he not behave as Malams typically behave, he would suffer a loss of esteem. In this case, piety and study of the Koran are important values in Kanuri society, so that individuals who stress those values in their own behavior are accorded prestige.

567  
565  
554  
829

The fourth and final variable which acts as a determinant in the system of social stratification is whether a man has been born a free-man (*kambe*) or a slave (*kalya*). This defines his specific relationship to another man, his master, should he have been born a slave, but it has no effect on the three previous variables discussed above. It does not follow that a man born a slave necessarily ranks low in power, wealth or prestige. There is a certain amount of independence in the operation of each of the four variables.

#### 1. Royalty and Aristocracy.

175  
565  
554

In pre-contact times social stratification was rigid, and had institutional support and recognition in two customs: the

---

1. usage here is according to Ralph Linton, The Cultural Background of Personality, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1955), pp. 73-74.

175  
- 565  
554 granting of titles by the Shehu (and before him by the Mais), and the regular practice of slavery.

A title (kagala) which the Shehu bestowed on a man was both a recognition, and a source of his social position, for the title embodied power, wealth and prestige. Power lay in the political office which accompanied the title; wealth lay in the access to land, labor and taxes which followed from title and office; prestige lay in the recognition by all of the symbolic meaning of the title. Aristocracy and slaves were given titles, but talaka, commoners, never were granted titles in former times.

565  
554  
644  
[643] One set of titles is held by royalty. The title of Shehu itself is conferred by a council (modules) according to strict rules of succession, after a Shehu dies. Other titles belong to members of the Shehu's family. These are unlike most titles in that they are titles ascribed by virtue of royal kinship and are not conferred to the individual by the Shehu. They include:

Maina - a prince, the son of a Shehu; also brothers of the present Shehu whose father was himself Shehu.

Mairam - (also called Nana) - the daughter of a Shehu.

Maidugu - the grandchild of a Shehu.

Some royal titles are granted by the Shehu to royalty. These are:

Maira - mother of the Shehu. If the Shehu's own mother is dead, another woman is given the title Maira, and functions as the Shehu's 'mother'. The title can be given to someone not of the Shehu's own family, should he wish to do so.

- 554 • 565 644 Mogorom - younger sister of the Shehu. A conferred title which can be given to anyone. If the Shehu does not like his younger sister, he can give the title to whomever he wishes.
- Dogoma - also the younger sister of the Shehu, but a lesser title than that of Mogorom.
- Gumsu - usually head wife of the Shehu, but the title can instead be given, at the Shehu's pleasure, to another wife.

Karllroma - head of the Shehu's chirs.

175 Next let us turn to consider the Chimas, who had been men-  
 423 tioned earlier. Since all land was the Shehu's land, he had  
 631 the power to give or withdraw the fiefs which were granted to  
 565 chimas. By custom, certain lands were reserved for the Imam.  
 554 In addition, the Maira, Gumsu, and Mogorom also had their own  
 644 fiefs. The remaining lands were largely in the hands of the  
 Shehu's kabuna, his knights and the commanders of his troops.  
 175 The Shehu's kabuna were divided into those who were free (kambe)  
 565 and those who were slave (kalya). A number of titles which the  
 554 Shehu granted were reserved for slaves. Among the slave titles,  
 567 some were titles of kabuna, and others were not. Both of these,  
 kabuna slaves and non-kabuna slaves, could be chimas. The four  
 most important chimas held the following titles: Kaigama (a  
 slave, and the head of all slave kabuna), Mastrema (a slave,  
 but not a kabuna), Yuroma (a slave, but not a kabuna), Yerima  
 (a freeman and a kabuna).

175 The most important Kanuri titles, all those mentioned above,  
 554  
 565

175  
554  
• 565 are individual titles which can be held by only one man at a time. There can be only one Kaigama, one Mastrema, and one Yerima at any given time. A man's son did not invariably inherit his father's title at his father's death. The title was conferred by the Shehu, customarily to the son of the previous title holder. If there were several sons, the one whom the Shehu judged most worthy was given the title; and if a title-holder had no sons, or no sons worthy of holding a title, the title might be given to anyone, though it was almost always given to someone of the household of the title-holder. There are several interesting cases of high titles given to talaka who were members of a household (the present holder of the title Talba is a slave who was given the title because there were no sons of the previous Talba; a horse boy inherited the title of Kaigama in the past; the Malam to the family, and a member of the household, inherited the title of Yirima). A talaka who was considered worthy, and was a member of a household whose head held a title might inherit that title; a common talaka without appropriate household affiliations could never hope to receive a title in former times.

The title was the mark of nobility in Kanuri society, and the embodiment of the several dimensions which, when taken together determined social importance. The title was linked to the system of feudal chimas who paid allegiance to the Shehu [63] and effectively governed the land. The chimas had power, subject only to review by the Shehu himself, over the people in [64]

175

554

• 565

1642

556

651

175

554

565

567

their lands; they had wealth because of their rights to tax the populace, as well as their access to large tracts of farm land worked by the populace for the benefit of their chima, and to labor in the form of tax payment to the chima. The chimas had prestige which rested in the noble title which they bore. But, interestingly enough, it was not necessary to be free-born in order to be a chima, or in order to receive a title. A slave of the Shehu could himself occupy a position of enormous power as a titled chima, could be extremely wealthy, and would be respected as well as feared by the talaka, the free-born populace.

554

565

592

Lastly, it should be borne in mind that these attributes which determine social position are shared by an entire household, and not solely by one individual. It is true that only one man is granted a title, but he is the head of a large household. The more important the man, and the greater his title, the larger will be his household, including: number of wives, slaves, concubines, children given to him, and tata njima. These all share to an extent in the increased power and wealth of the titled household head. As his own position rises, his slaves and tata njima increasingly receive greater power and responsibility. They become his kabuna, collect taxes for him, administer the lands and eventually hope to be appointed lowans, by which time they themselves will have large and important households.

## 2. Slaves.

565 Royalty, by virtue of their close kinship with the Shehu,  
354 fall into a distinct category in Kanuri society. For some, the kinship terminology takes the form of a title (Maina = prince), others are granted royal titles by the Shehu (Gumsu). Nobility represent a second category, composed of those titled freemen who trace no relationship to the Shehu. Here the titles are all conferred by the Shehu to a member of a household, who becomes the head of that household upon receiving the title.

567 Since the Kanuri recognize a category of slaves, they should be  
565 distinguished as a separate segment of the population. However, they do not form the bottom-most stratum of Kanuri society, as might be supposed. On the contrary, just as freemen are stratified into nobility and commoners, so too can slaves be considered as a vertical segment of Kanuri society, falling into numerous stratified layers within the category called "slave."

567 The principles governing slavery in Kanuri society must  
now be considered so that the above view of the position of the slave can be properly understood. A Moslem may not enslave another Moslem, so that slaves can be taken only from pagan peoples. In former times slaves were captured by raiding parties  
175 who drove into pagan territory, sacked and burned villages, and  
567 brought back captives who became slaves of Kanuri masters, either  
721 of the Shehu himself, or of officers of the army. Slaves were most frequently taken by the Kanuri from among the Marghi, to the south; from the tribes of the Gwoza hills; from the neigh-

Furthermore the status of the slave was never that

of a degraded individual, since titled slaves were themselves part of the nobility. In fact, a slave who is part of an important man's household may refer to "talaka" in a derogatory manner, indicating his own superior position to that of the impoverished peasant farmer.

### 3. Talaka.

The talaka in the towns and villages formed the bulk of the population in the days of the empire just as they do today. In former times they were the talaka of a particular chima; today they are the talaka of a particular District Head.

But the class of talaka is far from homogeneous. The primary distinction to be made is between rural and urban talaka. Rural talaka do tend to be a rather homogeneous group. Urban talaka may fall into a variety of types, which differ in their relative wealth and prestige. In the days of the empire there were wealthy talaka who lived in the cities. Trade had always been important in Bornu, and a class of important traders formed a segment of the urban talaka population. Similarly, the various specialists and artisans who lived in the towns and cities formed distinct groups within the talaka population, just as other types of specialists were and still are viewed as low-status groups.

Since they are all talaka, none wield political power, and so one might say that there were no differences between the various types of talaka with respect to power. However, there

However, there

- 565 were great wealth differences between different talaka groups.  
556 Traders, artisans, and farmers exhibited enormous wealth dif-  
554 ferences between them and, as would be expected, these wealth differences were reflected in the difference in size of household between different types of talaka. In the cities, wealthy traders and well-to-do artisans occupied large compounds along with the many members of their household; while non-specialized laborers, low-status artisans, hand-to-mouth tradesmen, and ordinary farmers lived with their nuclear families in small compounds and at a much lower standard of living.

55 With respect to relative prestige there were also great  
792 differences between various types of talaka. The most prestigious activities are associated with Islam. Piety and study of the Koran earn a man prestige. Devoting one's life to the study of the Koran, by becoming a Malam, earns one great prestige, though the Malam is dependent on charity and consequently can never be a wealthy man. At the top of the religious hierarchy there are individuals who may be powerful (since the Shehu is advised by his Malams) and wealthy, but these are exceptional individuals. Malams as a group enjoy great prestige, but little power or wealth.

#### h. Changes in the Stratification System.

648 At the time of the present study (1956-1957), Bornu was  
642 under British colonial rule, so that although the structure  
178 of the empire, with the Shehu at its apex, was still in exist-  
565

ence, British administrative officers made all final policy decisions. Since the system of social stratification finds its support in the political organization of the Kanuri state, and since that state is no longer the ultimate authority of the land, one might expect great changes in the social system today. While significant changes have been occurring, the old system of social stratification has been able to survive, in certain respects supported and bolstered by British colonial rule. It continues to shape Kanuri society today and to adapt itself to new conditions and new demands.

[178] The Shehu and the royal family are still present, and the Shehu continues to wield political power. Though a British resident was the ultimate authority, he acted through the Shehu [565] and the Shehu's council. In the eyes of the Kanuri people, the Shehu still was the symbol of the Kanuri state, though all Kanuri recognized that the White man (nasara) was present as super-authority.

178 Titled nobility are still present, and retain much of 565 their political power since they still control the great majority of District Headships. It is striking to note how many 634 Ajias, who replaced the chimas of old, are the heads of old noble families and the present holders of great Kanuri titles, [1829] both slave and free. The descendants of the chimas are the bulk of the Ajias, so it is not surprising that the talaka continue to view them as chimas and to use the term in referring to their present Ajia.

567  
178  
[554]

Slaves of the Shehu still hold the great slave titles of Kaigama and Kazella, and although slaves are no longer bought and sold, susana still consider themselves slaves and members of the household of present-day nobility. Nobles still continue to have chirs, and slaves ask permission of their masters before marrying.

178  
• 565  
555

[666]

It is among the great mass of talaka that the greatest changes have been occurring. New avenues to increased social importance have made their appearance in the last two decades. There are ways to attain political power today that previously were unavailable to talaka. Election to public office at the local, regional, or national level is becoming increasingly possible for talaka, and there are a number of individuals who have become powerful and important in recent years, despite their talaka background. Education has made possible the rapid rise of individuals of talaka background. They have risen in power and in prestige because of their education, and the specialized occupations which education has enabled them to practice. In many cases they have also been able to use their position as educated professional people to make successful careers in Provincial and regional politics, thereby acquiring political power. Finally, trade with the Western world has opened up new avenues to accumulation of capital on the part of the trading class of talaka, many of whom today are extremely wealthy individuals; and though this does not imply that an entirely new class of people has arisen in Kanuri society, it does mean that segments of one class of Kanuri society find themselves more

178  
556  
565  
441

- 113 -

178  
552  
• 563  
441  
178  
563

wealthy and more powerful than at any previous time in Kanuri history.

The old system of stratification was a rigid system. Present conditions have led to increased flexibility in the stratification system, by providing new avenues to power, to wealth and to prestige. This has meant that the relationship between categories of individuals within Kanuri society today is changed from the relationship which they maintained in former times.

[12.] These changes in the social structure become a focus of attention of the present study.

**[GEIDAM]**

425 land is sufficiently old so that he can sell the land if he  
671 wishes to. If a man works a piece of land for a long time (for  
425 ten years, for example) he can sell it. But in a recent legal  
695 case a policeman who worked in Geidam was given land by the  
Lowan. After a year he left Geidam for Maiduguri and sold the  
land. The Alkali ruled that he had not had the land for a suf-  
ficiently long period of time to enable him to sell it, and  
forced him to return the sum of money which was paid to him by  
the new owner.

241 Land is farmed under a variety of conditions. Talaka farm  
• 565 the land themselves with the help of wives and children. A  
592 wealthy man, however, may take a very large section of farm  
land from the Lowan, which he will not work personally. Instead  
the members of his household, his many tata njima, farm his land  
for him. His tata njima work on the farm of the household head  
[465] because this is one of their duties. They receive no payment  
241 in the form of a share of the crops for their labor. Some  
565 wealthy men may not have very large households of their own, and  
464 may hire day laborers to work for them. This, too, is a new ap-  
[176] proach to labor for the Kanuri. A man with a very large farm  
241 who does not intend to use all of his land himself can rent out  
427 sections, particularly if his land is in a very favorable loca-  
tion. The renter pays a fixed sum to the owner, and the crops  
belong entirely to him. No form of share-cropping is practiced.  
241 The Ajia of Geidam has huge sections of land allotted to him.  
604 Any of his people, his slaves, his kabuna or others attached to  
[423]

**[GEIDAM]**

241  
634  
[557] him, are given land from that belonging to the Ajia, should they  
desire to farm for themselves. Such a plot may be in a more  
or less desirable location depending on the man's importance  
and his rank. Many of the Ajia's kabuna have their own plots  
241 which they farm. In addition, the Ajia has his own personal  
693 farm close to Geidam, which is worked exclusively by his kabuna.  
460 All kabuna, important and minor ones alike, under the supervi-  
sion of the Ajia's Assistant (Wakil) farm the Ajia's land for  
him.

Table II

Percentage of people in Geidam who farm

|                                        | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> | <u>Farmed last year</u>                         |
|----------------------------------------|------------|-----------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 241<br>463<br>• 565<br>554 Aristocracy | 3          | 2         | 1 did; 1 not for 15 yrs.                        |
| Koranic Malams                         | 2          | 1         | no                                              |
| Canteen traders                        | 6          | 0         |                                                 |
| N. A. Malams                           | 3          | 1         | farmed last year--only in Geidam<br>1 1/2 mons. |
| Kabuna                                 | 1          | 5         | 3 did; 2 didn't                                 |
| Craftsmen                              | 3          | 0         |                                                 |
| Talaka                                 | 3          | 4         | 1 did; 3 didn't                                 |
| Low-status                             | <u>2</u>   | <u>2</u>  | <u>1 did; 1 didn't</u>                          |
| Total:                                 | 23         | 15        | 7 did; 8 didn't farm last year                  |

Not all the people of Geidam farm. As may be seen from Table II, 23 of 38 individuals questioned had a farm of their own (61 per cent); 15 did not have a farm (39 per cent). Although all who live permanently in Geidam and pay taxes there

**[GEIDAM]**

241 are entitled to farm land, not all actually farm. Slightly  
563 more than half of the talaka, craftsmen, and low-status people  
954 in the sample farm; these all farm their own plots assisted by  
463 their wives, the typical pattern of farming for lower class  
(463) people. The canteen traders, a group of prosperous individuals with large households, all have a farm, though none farm themselves. Their farms are worked for them by their tata njima, or by hired laborers. Only one of the kabuna in the sample farms for himself, though of course they all farm for the Ajla on his farm. Finally, it can be seen that the pattern of farming is not absolutely regular each year. Seven of the fifteen individuals who had not made a farm that year had farmed the  
241 previous year. Most of the people of Geldam do farm, but none  
483 depend entirely on farming for their living and since farming is a secondary activity for all, they may omit farming on a given year, and may rent their land to someone else. Still others have entirely given up farming.

**2. Craftsmen.**

463 The economy of an urban community depends primarily on its specialists. These may be considered as falling within three broad categories. The first category is made up of artisans, that is, skilled workers who produce a product which the ordinary man cannot easily make for himself, or who perform a service requiring special skills which are beyond the abilities of every citizen. These will be referred to here as craftsmen. The sec-

**GEIDAM**

627 and he has had an opportunity to present his side of the dis-  
829 pute. If he feels that the mediator has been bribed and the  
671 case has not been properly handled, he knows that he must never  
[626] bring a case for sholo before that Ajia or Lowan again and he  
will let his relatives, friends, and neighbors know what oc-  
curred. If a decision has been against him, and he has no  
reason to suspect that it was not fairly given, then he cannot  
take the case for further sholo, since his case has already  
been decided. Taking his case before the Alkali would be to  
take it once again for sholo, and if he had trusted the Alkali  
more than he did the Lowan who originally gave sholo in the  
case, he would have brought his complaint directly to the Al-  
[643]kali in the first place. In addition, the court exacts wushira  
from the winner, more than is paid in sholo, as well as other  
fees paid to police who bring in witnesses, and to court ap-  
pointed assessors of property, in property disputes.

#### 4. Taxation and the role of kabuna.

- 663 The two primary responsibilities of a Kanuri political of-  
651 ficial are to properly administer his territory and to collect  
taxes. The first duty involves the handling of disputes and  
• [545] maintaining adequate control over subordinates. So long as the  
traditional social system remains in effect, each class of in-  
dividual will know its place, talaka will come to those in au-  
thority for sholo, subordinates will fear and respect their  
superiors, and those in power will not usurp their power by  
unduly exploiting the populace.

**[GEIDAM]**

634 dam once again, it is evident that one group is a modern group  
178 which has no counterpart in traditional Kanuri society. This  
177  
554 is a group of NA appointees including the Primary School Head-  
master and the three school teachers, the Agricultural expert,  
the Veterinary, the Hides and Skins Inspector, the Forestry  
expert, the Local Government Advisor, the Adult Education Organ-  
[191] izer, the Dispenser, and the Sanitation Inspector. All of these  
[871] individuals have been educated in Western schools, most through  
[463] secondary school, and all speak some English. They have all  
received specialized training for their jobs. In addition,  
all are young men or young adult men. Because they have all  
been educated, they are addressed as "Malam," an extension of  
the term for a Koranic scholar to new areas of scholarship.  
(They will be referred to henceforth as "NA Malams".)

634 Despite the fact that the use of the term Malam indicates  
177 a general recognition of their scholarly attainments, the NA  
554 Malams are a part of the political system, under the jurisdic-  
565 tion of the Ajia. Most of the NA Malams in Geidam are sons of  
871 Lowans or Ajias, or have some direct connection with the house-  
hold of a Lowan or Ajia. This is because the aristocracy and  
those in political power have been more likely to send their  
[829] sons to school than the talaka. Talaka are loath to send  
their children to the Western school as they are needed at  
home to assist in farming, and because parents see nothing to  
[555] be gained by sending one's child to the school. Lowans, how-  
ever, are themselves pressured to set a good example, and they

**[GEIDAM]**

634 see that, in order to succeed politically in future years, a  
871 school education is an advantage since the youngster learns to  
555 speak English, and learns enough of the ways of the Englishman  
177 to better himself. Thus the group of NA Malams that has emerged  
• 545 derives from the aristocracy or from minor political official-  
554 dom. Their goals are commensurate with their social background;  
all hope some day to be appointed Lowan or Ajia, or to achieve  
political power by gaining a post in Maiduguri. As a group,  
therefore, they belong within the political structure, though  
their roles are not specifically political. Their aspirations  
are the traditional Kanuri aspirations toward political power  
and social prestige. However, the means to obtain power which  
[178] is represented by the NA Malams is newly emergent in Kanuri so-  
ciety.

**E. Religion at the Communal Level.**

128 Religious practice among the Kanuri does not differ from  
76 community to community. Therefore, in discussing the manifesta-  
[184] tions of religion in the community of Geidam, it will not be  
necessary to describe Islamic observances, such as the ritual  
128 prayer. The present discussion will be limited to two areas:  
79 religious specialists and their place in the social system of  
[185] Geidam; and religious festivals as they are celebrated at the  
community level.

**GEIDAM**

796 Ngumeri Laya or Salla Laya. This is the festival at which sac-  
 782 rifice of a ram is made, corresponding to the Hebrew festival

of Pesach and the Christian Easter. Salla Laya was celebrated  
 on July 9, 1957. The first ram sacrificed is the Shehu's ram  
 in Maiduguri, a special ram with black rings about his eyes.

In Maiduguri a great festival marked by communal prayer attended  
 by the Shehu accompanies the sacrifice of this, the first ram.

[1825] The Liman says the words "Bismillahi" (in the name of Allah) as  
 he cuts the ram's throat, and the blood pours into a basin or  
 shallow hole. In Maiduguri people rushed forward to dip their  
 fingers into the blood and transfer it onto their face, as the

• [565] blood is considered blessed. After the Shehu's ram has been

[431] sacrificed, rich men return to their homes and sacrifice their  
 own rams. The meat is then distributed to the poor, and the peo-  
 ple of one's ward. In Geldam Yerima Mustapha distributes about

[123] a dozen rams to other important people. In 1957 this included  
 the visiting anthropologist, who had the ram sacrificed appro-  
 priately by a neighboring Malam, and distributed the meat as  
 sadaka to his neighbors and the people of his ward.

796 A month after Salla Laya is the festival of Tsuro Mbulo,  
 also called Salla Laya Ngawarinz --the tail of Salla Laya (Ar.  
 Ashura). It took place on the two days of August 5th and 6th.

[785] During Tsuro Mbulo pious individuals fast for two days. Un-

[567] like Ramadan, this is not an obligatory fast, and younger men  
 tend not to fast while older men keep the fast of Tsuro Mbulo.

796 All, however, participate in the feasting after sunset of the  
 431

**[GEIDAM]**

796 second day. This is the time for paying the zakat, the alms-  
431  
565 tax. Rich men give away clothes and money as sadaka at this  
777 time so that they will have good luck. Poor people give away  
602 kola nuts and perfume. This is also the time when members of  
the various jili give small gifts to members of linked jili  
796 with whom they have joking relationships (nangima). As the  
609  
733 sun sets on the second day all women bang on their water stor-  
age pots to drive away the jinn (spirit) who brings sickness.

515 On the second night everyone also bathes. People, women in  
particular, then go to the houses of Malams where the Malam  
reads a section of the Koran which is then repeated by those  
718 present. The Malam then assigns counting of prayer beads (ta-  
535 jini) for each person. Later in the night dancing is held in  
657 a central area, and many guns are discharged. Little boys mill  
about knocking sparks off smouldering pieces of wood onto  
other little boys.

782 The last of the important festival days is the Prophet's  
Birthday, called variously Ngumari Kura (great festival), Ngumari  
Kugulbe (kugul means chicken), since chickens are sacrificed  
at this time, or Mamaludu.

**F. Marriage, Family and Household.**

128 In the preceding chapter, the general features of Kanuri  
culture were presented and it was pointed out that this was  
largely ideal culture. The present chapter, in contrast, deals  
with a single community and describes behavior as it occurs

[GEIDAM]

582 from Table VI that in the Geidam sample the median age of marriage is 20.25 (mean age is 21.35), but that the range is very great, extending from one individual who married at the age of twelve to one who was not married until the age of thirty-five.

582 Of the eight categories presented in Table VI, only one seems  
463 to differ considerably from the norm in age of marriage, that  
565 one being the Canteen Traders. Four of the six in that category married later than the median age, two as late as age twenty-eight. This is interesting because the standard explanation for late marriage is that the individual must work to save money for a bride-price. However, Talaka seem to marry rather early while wealthy traders marry late. This would lead one to suspect that there is also a proportion of individuals who delay marriage until they consider themselves capable of supporting (or needing) a wife, and that this delay results in late marriage for a number of young men who might well have afforded the basic bride-price years earlier.

595 Table VII presents data on the number of wives had by each  
of forty-four men. Exactly half of the men in the sample have one wife; sixteen men have two wives; one has three and two have four wives; three have no wives--one of these is twenty-five years old and has not yet married--and the other two divorced wives not long ago. Only two men have concubines: Yerima Mustapha has five, and one wife; while Malam Ali Mandara, the Chief Scribe, has one concubine given to him by Kaigama. Comparing the mean number of wives for the various groups, it is clear

(TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 199 )

582  
565  
554  
463

Table VI  
Age at First Marriage

|                 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | ... | 35 |
|-----------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|
| Aristocracy     |    |    |    |    |    |    | 1  |    | 1  |    | 1  |    |    | 2  |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |    |
| Koranic Malams  |    |    |    |    |    |    | 1  |    |    |    |    |    | 1  |    | 1  |    |    |    |    |    |     |    |
| Canteen Traders |    |    |    |    |    |    | 1  |    | 1  |    |    |    |    | 1  | 1  |    |    | 2  |    |    |     |    |
| NA Malams       |    |    |    |    |    | 2  |    | 1  | 1  |    |    | 1  |    |    |    |    |    | 1  |    |    |     |    |
| Kabuna          |    |    | 1  |    |    | 1  | 1  |    |    |    |    | 1  |    | 1  |    |    |    |    |    |    | 1   |    |
| Craftsmen       |    |    | 1  | 2  |    |    |    |    | 1  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 1  | 1  |     |    |
| Talaka          |    |    |    |    |    | 3  | 1  |    | 1  |    | 1  | 1  |    | 1  |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |    |
| Low-status      | 1  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 1  |    |    |    |    |    | 1  |    |    |    |    |    |     |    |
| Totals:         | 1  | -  | -  | 2  | 2  | 6  | 5  | 1  | 6  | -  | 2  | 4  | 3  | 5  | -  | -  | 3  | -  | 1  | 1  | 1   | 1  |

median age = 20.25

mean age = 21.35

[GEIDAN]

## [GEIDAN]

Table VII  
Present Number of Wives

|                 | <u>0</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>concubines</u> | <u>Mean No.<br/>of wives</u> |
|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Aristocracy     | -        | 3        | 2        | -        | -        | 1                 | 1.4                          |
| Koranic Malams  | -        | 1        | 2        | -        | -        | -                 | 1.7                          |
| Canteen Traders | -        | -        | 3        | 1        | 2        | -                 | 2.8                          |
| NA Malams       | -        | 3        | 3        | -        | -        | 1                 | 2.5                          |
| Kabuna          | 1        | 1        | 4        | -        | -        | -                 | 1.5                          |
| Craftsmen       | -        | 4        | 2        | -        | -        | -                 | 1.3                          |
| Talaka          | 1        | 7        | -        | -        | -        | -                 | .88                          |
| Low-status      | 1        | 3        | -        | -        | -        | -                 | .75                          |
| Total no.       | 3        | 22       | 16       | 1        | 2        | 2                 |                              |

that the canteen traders have significantly more wives as a group, while the talaka and the low status individuals have significantly fewer wives. Among the canteen traders are found the only two individuals who have four wives; among the talaka and the low status individuals none have more than one wife and two do not have any.

582 The many differences between marrying a kala yaska (virgin)  
 587 and a zogor (divorced woman) have been discussed at some length.

586 Table VIII presents data on the percentage of zogor and kala  
 463 yaska among the present wives of individuals in the sample. Un-  
 584

der a (Present Wives) it can be seen that the first four cate-  
 gories have married predominantly kala yaskas while the bottom

[183] four have overwhelmingly married zogors. The cultural ideal is  
 for a young man to marry a kala yaska at his first marriage.

Most individuals in each of the eight categories have in fact

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 201]

582  
587  
554  
463

Table VIII  
Whether Marriage was with a Kalo Yaska or a Zogor

|                 | a.            |       |       | b.         |       |       | c.                 |       |       |
|-----------------|---------------|-------|-------|------------|-------|-------|--------------------|-------|-------|
|                 | Present wives |       |       | First wife |       |       | All previous wives |       |       |
|                 | kalo          | yaska | zogor | kalo       | yaska | zogor | kalo               | yaska | zogor |
| Aristocracy     | 6             |       | 1     | 5          |       | ---   | 16                 |       | 10    |
| Koranic Malams  | 5             |       | -     | 3          |       | -     | 10                 |       | -     |
| Canteen Traders | 12            |       | 5     | 4          |       | 2     | 19                 |       | 19    |
| NA Malams       | 7             |       | 2     | 3          |       | 3     | 15                 |       | 16    |
| Kabuna          | 1             |       | 7     | 4          |       | 2     | 7                  |       | 31    |
| Craftsmen       | 1             |       | 7     | 4          |       | 2     | 5                  |       | 38    |
| Talaka          | -             |       | 7     | 5          |       | 3     | 6                  |       | 64    |
| Low-status      | -             |       | 3     | 1          |       | 2     | 2                  |       | 22    |
| Totals:         | 32            |       | 32    | 29         |       | 14    | 80                 |       | 200   |

[GEIDAM]

2: Rosman

E-5

(1956-1957) 1966

MS14 Kanuri MS14

## [GEIDAM]

582 done this (see b - First wife), so that twice as many first  
 587 marriages (29) were with kalə yaskə than with zogors (14).

• 565 On the other hand, in the many subsequent marriages into which  
 554 the members of this sample entered (see c - All previous wives),  
 463 many more were with zogors (200) than with kalə yaskə (80).

It is evident that talaka and low status individuals tend over-  
 whelmingly to marry zogors after their initial first marriage  
 since of subsequent marriages only two were with kalə yaskə,  
 while eighty-one were with zogors. On the other hand, the four  
 upper categories tend to marry kalə yaskə more frequently than

[792] zogors. This is particularly striking for the category of Ko-  
 ranic Malams, all of whose ten marriages have been with kalə  
 [163] yaskə. This is significant because, as will be noted below,  
 the Koranic Malams are blessed with many children while other  
 people have relatively few.

593 Table IX presents data on the seclusion of wives. The  
 562

Table IX

565 Whether wife is secluded (kule)  
 554  
 463

|                 | <u>kule</u> | <u>partly kule</u> | <u>not kule</u> |
|-----------------|-------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Aristocracy     | 4           | 1                  | -               |
| Koranic malams  | 2           | 1                  | -               |
| Canteen Traders | 6           | -                  | -               |
| NA Malams       | 6           | -                  | -               |
| Kabuna          | 1           | 1                  | 3               |
| Craftsmen       | -           | -                  | 6               |
| Talaka          | 1           | -                  | 6               |
| Low-status      | -           | -                  | 3               |
| Totals:         | 20          | 3                  | 18              |

## [GEIDAM]

593 four upper categories all seclude their wives, save for two  
 562 individuals whose wives are permitted to leave the compound  
 • 565 but who rarely go out (partly kule). In the four lower cate-  
 554 gories only a few individuals attempt to keep their wives se-  
 463 cluded. The great majority permit their wives to leave the  
 compound and go about the town; indeed, ordinary people would  
 be unable to maintain themselves without the economic assist-  
 ance of their wives.

## 2. Divorce.

586 From the data presented in Table X it is possible to ob-  
 tain an estimate of the divorce rate in Geldam. Table Xa gives  
 the total number of wives, including their present wives, to  
 whom the members of the sample have been married. They range  
 from four individuals who have had but one wife, to one man  
 who has had twenty. Six of the forty-four individuals have  
 had from thirteen to twenty wives. The median for the group  
 is 5.5 wives (mean is 6.4). The groups do not seem to differ  
 radically from one another.

Table Xb comprises the total number of wives (Xa) minus  
 the number of wives to which each individual is presently mar-  
 ried (Table VII), and thus indicates the number of divorces for  
 each individual. They range from six individuals who have  
 never been divorced to one man who has been divorced nineteen  
 times. The median number of divorces for the group is 3.75  
 (mean is 4.98). The Koranic Malams have clearly had fewer di-

586  
 565  
 554  
 463  
 [TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 205]

586  
554  
463

Table X

Xa

Total Number of Wives per Person

|                 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Aristocracy     |   | 1 |   | 1 |   |   |   | 1 | 2 |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Koranic Malams  |   |   | 1 |   | 2 |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Canteen Traders |   |   |   |   | 1 | 1 | 2 |   | 1 | 1 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| NA Malams       |   |   | 3 | 1 |   |   |   |   | 1 |   |    |    |    |    |    |    | 1  |    |    |    |    |
| Kabuna          |   |   |   |   | 2 | 1 |   | 1 |   | 1 | 1  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Craftsmen       |   | 1 |   |   |   | 2 |   | 1 | 1 |   |    |    |    |    |    |    | 1  |    |    |    |    |
| Talake          |   | 2 |   |   | 1 |   |   | 1 | 1 |   |    |    |    | 1  |    |    | 1  |    |    | 1  |    |
| Low-status      | 1 |   |   | 1 |   |   |   |   | 1 |   |    |    | 1  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Totals:         | 1 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 1  | -  | -  | 2  | -  | 1  | 1  | 1  | -  | -  | 1  |

median = 5.5  
mean = 6.4

[GEIDAN]

2:Rosman

E-5 (1956-1957) 1966

MS14 Kanuri MS14

586  
565  
554  
463

2:Rosman E-5 (1956-1957) 1966 MS14 Kanuri MS14

X b  
Number of Divorces per Person

|                 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Aristocracy     | 1 |   | 1 |   | 1 |   | 1 | 1 |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Koranic Malams  |   |   | 1 | 2 |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Canteen Traders |   |   | 1 | 2 |   | 1 | 2 |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| NA Malams       | 2 | 1 | 1 |   |   | 1 |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    | 1  |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Kabuna          |   |   | 2 | 1 |   |   | 1 |   | 1 | 1 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Craftsmen       | 1 |   |   |   | 2 | 1 |   | 1 |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    | 1  |    |    |    |    |
| Talaka          | 1 | 1 |   | 1 |   |   | 1 | 1 |   |   |    |    | 1  |    |    | 1  |    |    |    | 1  |    |
| Low-status      | 1 |   | 1 |   |   |   |   | 1 |   |   |    |    | 1  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Totals:         | 6 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 1 | -  | -  | 2  | 1  | -  | 2  | -  | -  | -  | 1  | -  |

median = 3.75  
mean = 4.86

[GEIDAM]

## [GEIDAM]

- 205 -

586  
• 565  
554  
463  
vances than have other groups. In turn, the talaka have had more numerous divorces. There is a distinct tendency for the lower categories in the table, who marry overwhelmingly with zogors, as noted above, to marry and divorce more frequently than the upper categories (canteen traders and NA Malams), and in fact the Koranic Malams who marry only kalg yaskas have the lowest divorce rate.

## 3. Family and Household.

163  
The number of living children of each of the individuals in the sample is presented in Table XI. In all, 44 adult Ka-

Table XIa  
Number of Living Children

|                                      | 0  | 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|--------------------------------------|----|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 163<br>565<br>554<br>463 Aristocracy | 1  | 2  | 2 |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Koranic Malams                       |    |    | 1 |   |   | 1 |   |   | 1 |
| Canteen Traders                      | 1  | 1  |   | 2 | 2 |   |   |   |   |
| NA Malams                            | 1  | 3  | 1 | 1 |   |   |   |   |   |
| Kabuna                               | 4  | 1  |   | 1 |   |   |   |   |   |
| Craftsmen                            | 4  | 1  | 1 |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Talaka                               | 7  |    |   |   | 1 |   |   |   |   |
| Low-status                           | 1  | 2  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Totals:                              | 19 | 10 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 1 | - | - | 1 |

## [GEIDAM]

Table XIb

Cases of Children Given Away

|                 |    |                                                    |              |
|-----------------|----|----------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Aristocracy     | 2: | to FaYoBr after weaning<br>to FaEISI after weaning | 597<br>565 • |
| Koranic Malams  | 1: | to MoMo after weaning                              | 554          |
| Canteen Traders | 1: | to cousin after weaning                            | 463          |
| NA Malams       | 1: | to FaEIBr (chibuna) after weaning                  |              |
| Kabuna          | -  |                                                    |              |
| Craftsmen       | 1: | to neighbor (chibuna) after weaning                |              |
| Talaka          | 1: | to FaMo at age 4                                   |              |
| Low-status      | 1: | to chibuna at age 11                               |              |

8

median number of children = .75

mean number of children = 1.33

nuri men in this sample have 57 living children. One hundred  
 and eight children had been born to the group, but 51 of these  
 have died. Because of the exceptionally high infant mortality  
 rate, children are greatly desired and prized. In addition to  
 malaria, which is the greatest killer of infants, an extremely  
 high rate of venereal disease is present in Bornu, and a high  
 percentage of those infected are sterile and unable to bear chil-  
 dren. One factor in spreading venereal disease is the high di-  
 vorce rate. Frequent divorce and remarriage spreads the disease  
 throughout the population, and results in many sterile individ-  
 uals who desperately want children. In their desire for chil-  
 dren, they divorce and remarry, thus spreading the disease  
 still further. In particular, if they marry a zigor they are

163  
163  
165[842]  
[164]164  
586  
[842]

## [GEIDAN]

- 207 -

In particular, if they marry a zogor they are less likely to have children than if they marry a kalɔ yaskɔ. This probably accounts for the high birth rate among the Koranic Malams (one has eight children; one has five); they have all married kalɔ yaskas, so that neither they or their wives are likely to be infected. On the other hand, in the lower categories (kabuna, craftsmen, talaka) a majority of the individuals have had no children at all. Seven of the eight talaka have no living children. This is the group with the highest divorce rate, and when they remarry they invariably marry zogors (see Table VIII) so that the chances are high that either husband or wife will be infected and sterile.

Table XIb reveals that eight of the 57 children who survived were given away, and grew up in the household of another family. At first, this seems difficult to reconcile with the great love for children and desire to have children. However, those who have borne a child have indicated their ability to bear others. Children are frequently given to relatives who have no children of their own, and who are probably unable to bear children but want a child badly. It may be seen that children are given away to siblings of the parent, to the child's grandparent, or to the chibuna after whom the child has been named. Six of the eight were given immediately after the child was weaned; two were given away at later ages. Giving of children at later ages is related to frequent divorce. Since the child belongs to the father, he may send the child to his mother or father should he, the father, not have an adequate home at the time.

[GEIDAM]

- 208 -

000 have an adequate home at the time.

634 Figure 4 presents a diagram of the compound of Yerima  
 351 Mustapha, whose enormous household is not included in Table  
 592 XII. Yerima's compound is the size of a city block (79 yards  
 by 160 yards), and is surrounded by mud walls which are ten  
 feet tall. The shaded sections to the rear make up the wom-  
 en's area, and within can be seen the ~~zagos~~ of his wife  
 (Haja Fati), and those of his chirs. (One chir left Yerima's  
 household, so that six house areas appear in the diagram  
 though Yerima has only five chirs.) The sole entrance into  
 the women's area is through Yerima's personal quarters. The  
 house areas of three additional nuclear families can be seen  
 in the diagram. These are slave families, who raise their  
 children within Yerima's household. Several store houses are  
 present, as well as a large inner courtyard in which six or  
 seven of Yerima's horses are kept. Other houses provide liv-  
 ing quarters for the numerous slaves, tata njima, and retainers  
 (walidi) who comprise the bulk of the household. Alongside  
 the entrance (chinna) and facing the dandal is a row of offi-  
 cial offices which are in fact an integral part of the Ajari.

592 The principles of household affiliation have been de-  
 • 565 scribed in the previous chapter. In Table XII the actual  
 554 composition of forty-three households is presented. In each  
 463 row are found the various individuals who comprise a single  
 household. Thus the four first rows represent the category  
 of the aristocracy in the sample. (As noted the household

(TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 213 )

592  
565  
554  
463

Table XIII  
Household Composition

|                    | wives    | chil-<br>dren | tata<br>n'lma | rela-<br>tives | wife's<br>rela-<br>tives | zogors | chil-<br>buna | others                  | yal<br>total | house-<br>hold<br>total |
|--------------------|----------|---------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------------|--------|---------------|-------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| <u>Aristocracy</u> | 2        | 1             | 1             | -              | WiYoSi                   | ElBrDa | 1             | -                       | 4            | 8                       |
| (minus             | 1        | 1             | 2             | Fa'cou         | -                        | -      | -             | -                       | 3            | 6                       |
| Yerima)            | 1        | 1             | 4             | -              | -                        | -      | -             | -                       | 3            | 7                       |
|                    | 2        | 1             | -             | -              | -                        | -      | -             | 3 friend's<br>children  | 3            | 7                       |
| <u>Koranic</u>     | 1        | 4             | -             | -              | -                        | -      | -             | -                       | 0            | 6                       |
| <u>Malams</u>      | 2        | 4             | -             | -              | -                        | -      | -             | -                       | 0            | 7                       |
|                    | 2        | 2             | -             | Mo             | -                        | -      | -             | student                 | 2            | 7                       |
| <u>Canteen</u>     | 2        | 2             | -             | Mo             | -                        | -      | -             | -                       | 0            | 5                       |
| <u>Traders</u>     | 2        | 0             | -             | YoBr + Wi      | -                        | -      | -             | -                       | 6            | 9                       |
|                    | 3        | 1             | 2             | YoBr+Wi+Da     | -                        | -      | -             | -                       | 4            | 9                       |
|                    | 4        | 4             | -             | -              | -                        | -      | 2             | -                       | 0            | 9                       |
|                    | 2        | 0             | 5             | -              | -                        | -      | -             | friend+Wi               | 7            | 10                      |
|                    | 4        | 3             | 2             | -              | -                        | -      | 2             | malam+Wi:<br>5 students | 11           | 19                      |
| <u>NA Malams</u>   | (1 chlr) | 1             | 7             | YoBr; YoSi     | -                        | 1      | -             | -                       | 10           | 14                      |
|                    | 2        | 2             | -             | YoBr           | -                        | -      | -             | Fa's chibuna<br>+ Wi    | 3            | 8                       |
|                    | 1        | 1             | -             | 2 YoBr         | WiYoSi                   | -      | -             | -                       | 3            | 6                       |
|                    | 2        | 2             | 2             | ElBrSo         | (ElWiYoBr<br>(ElWiYoSi   | 1      | -             | -                       | 6            | 11                      |
|                    | 2        | 1             | 1             | -              | -                        | -      | -             | -                       | 1            | 5                       |
|                    | 1        | -             | 1             | FaBrSo         | -                        | cousin | -             | -                       | 3            | 5                       |

[BEIDAM]

592  
565  
554  
463

Table XIII (continued)

|                   | wives | chil-<br>dren | tata<br>nima | rela-<br>tives          | wife's<br>rela-<br>tives | zogora   | chi-<br>buna | others            | yal<br>total | house-<br>hold<br>total |
|-------------------|-------|---------------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| <u>Kabuna</u>     | 2     | 0             | 1            | -                       | -                        | YoWiYoSi | -            | YoWi's<br>chibuna | 3            | 6                       |
|                   | 2     | 0             | -            | -                       | -                        | -        | -            | -                 | 0            | 3                       |
|                   | 0     | 0             | -            | -                       | -                        | YoSi     | -            | -                 | 1            | 3                       |
|                   | 2     | 3             | 1            | EiBrSo                  | -                        | -        | -            | -                 | 2            | 3                       |
|                   | 2     | 0             | -            | -                       | -                        | -        | -            | -                 | 0            | 3                       |
|                   | 1     | 0             | 2            | Mo                      | -                        | -        | -            | -                 | 2            | 3                       |
| <u>Craftsmen</u>  | 1     | 0             | 3            | -                       | -                        | -        | -            | -                 | 3            | 5                       |
|                   | 1     | 0             | -            | -                       | -                        | -        | -            | -                 | 0            | 2                       |
|                   | 2     | 0             | -            | MoBrSo                  | -                        | -        | -            | -                 | 1            | 4                       |
|                   | 2     | 0             | 3            | -                       | -                        | -        | -            | -                 | 3            | 6                       |
|                   | 1     | 0             | -            | -                       | -                        | -        | -            | -                 | 0            | 2                       |
|                   | 1     | 0             | -            | -                       | -                        | -        | -            | -                 | 0            | 2                       |
| <u>Talaka</u>     | 1     | 0             | -            | -                       | -                        | -        | EiBrSo       | -                 | 1            | 3                       |
|                   | 1     | 3             | -            | -                       | -                        | -        | -            | -                 | 0            | 3                       |
|                   | 1     | 0             | -            | -                       | -                        | -        | -            | -                 | 0            | 2                       |
|                   | 1     | 0             | -            | -                       | -                        | -        | -            | -                 | 0            | 2                       |
|                   | 1     | 0             | 1            | -                       | -                        | -        | -            | -                 | 1            | 3                       |
|                   | 0     | 0             | -            | -                       | -                        | 1        | -            | -                 | 1            | 2                       |
|                   | 1     | 0             | -            | -                       | -                        | -        | -            | -                 | 0            | 2                       |
|                   | 1     | 0             | -            | -                       | Wi's gr.so               | -        | -            | -                 | 1            | 3                       |
| <u>Low-status</u> | 0     | 0             | -            | (lives in EiBr's house) | -                        | -        | -            | -                 | -            | 4                       |
|                   | 1     | 0             | -            | WiEiBrDa                | -                        | -        | -            | -                 | 1            | 3                       |
|                   | 1     | 0             | -            | 2 YoSi<br>cousin        | -                        | -        | -            | -                 | 3            | 5                       |
|                   | 1     | 1             | -            | -                       | -                        | -        | -            | -                 | 0            | 3                       |

[BEIDAN]

592  
565  
554  
463

Table XIIb  
Summary of Household Composition Table (XIIa)

Totals for 43 households:

38 Tata njima

21 relatives of household head: 3 Mo; 6 YoBr (2 with wives, 1 YoBrDa); 3 YoSi;  
2 ElBrSo; 4 cousins

6 relatives of wife of household head: 3 WiYoSi; 1 WiYoBr; 1 WiElBrDa; 1  
Wi's grandson.

7 zogors: 4 relatives; 3 not family.

6 chibuna

16 others: comprising - Wi's chibuna; Fa's chibuna + Wife; malam + Wi and 5  
students; friend + Wi; 3 friend's children; student of Koranic malam.

[GEIDAN]

Mean Number of Tata Njima and mean number of Non-nuclear family in Household

|                           | <u>Tata Njima</u> | <u>Yal Members</u> | <u>Mean size of Total Household</u> |
|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Aristocracy<br>(- Yerima) | 1.8               | 3.5                | 7.0                                 |
| Koranic Malams            | 0                 | .67                | 6.67                                |
| Canteen Traders           | 1.5               | 4.67               | 10.2                                |
| NA Malams                 | 1.8               | 4.3                | 8.2                                 |
| Kabuna                    | .67               | 1.3                | 4.5                                 |
| Craftsmen                 | 1.0               | 1.2                | 3.3                                 |
| Talaka                    | .13               | .5                 | 2.75                                |
| Low-status                | 0                 | 1.0                | 3.75                                |

**[BEIDAM]**

592 of Yerima Mustapha is not included.)

• 545  
554  
463

Household composition has been broken down into the following categories: wives and children (which have already been discussed), tata njima, relatives of the household head, relatives of the wives of the household head, zogors, chibuna named after the household head, and miscellaneous others. The term yal refers to members of the household who are not part of the nuclear families of the household head. The final column gives the total size for each of the forty-three households in the table. It may be seen that household size ranges from two to nineteen members.

Table XIIb presents a summary of the information in Table XIIa. There are 38 tata njima attached to the present 43 households, but in looking at the mean number of tata njima in the various categories, it is apparent that they are found largely in four categories: those of the aristocracy, the canteen traders, the NA Malams and the craftsmen. Tata njima included in Table XIIa are only those actually living in the compound of the household head. The canteen traders in particular have a number of tata njima who are married and live in their own compounds but return to their "master's" house to eat their meals. These have not been included here. Relatives of the household head are primarily younger siblings (6 YoBr; 3 YoSi) and some even have their wives and children with them. There are three cases of mothers living with married sons, but no fathers. In no case of the present 44

**[GEIDAM]**

592 households is there any indication of patrilocal residence and of a patrilocal extended family. The only approximation is found in the cases of elderly mothers living with their married sons, and in the case of married younger brothers with wife and child. More distant relatives are also found; although two cases of ElBrSo are present, in no case is there an elder brother living in the household of his younger brother, where the younger brother is the acknowledged household head. The same is true of a wife's relatives living in the household of her husband. There are six cases of this; four are younger siblings of the wife, one is her ElBrDa, and one a grandson.

592 An older sibling of the wife is nowhere present. The same pat-  
586 tern is evident in the zogors who are temporarily a part of a household, after a divorce. A zogor returns to the household of her luwalli. Seven zogors are present in the above households. Three are not related to the household head who served as luwalli; four are relatives--a YoSi, an ElBrDa, a YoSi of the wife and a cousin.

592 Corresponding to the eight children who were given away  
597 to relatives or to chibuna by the members of the sample are  
565 the children given to members of the sample and growing up in  
463 their houses. There are six chibuna, young children named  
[553] after the household head and growing up in his house, who are a part of the present group of households. Four of these are found in the canteen traders, one in the aristocracy, and one (an ElBrSo) among the talaka. It is evident, therefore, that

592  
597

[GEIDAM]

- 215 -

592 chibuna tend to be given to higher-status household heads.

597 The chibuna relationship is also found in the last miscellaneous category which includes a wife's chibuna in one household, and a chibuna of the household head's father plus that 592 man's wife in another household. Friends and friends' children, and finally a Malam, his wife and five students taken into the household as an act of charity, are also found in the miscellaneous category.

592 Most of the households in the sample contain individuals  
• 565 who are not members of the nuclear family of the household  
554 head. These make up his yal. The mean size of yal (Table  
463 XI1b) varies widely from group to group. For five groups it is small (Koranic Malams, kabuna, craftsmen, talaka, low-status individuals), with approximately one additional person in each household. For three groups (aristocracy, canteen traders, NA Malams) the yal is fairly large with the highest mean (4.67 members of the yal) occurring among the canteen traders. Finally, the range in total size of household for each of the eight groups can be seen in the lower right-hand column of [162] Table XI1b. The mean size of household for the group of canteen traders is 10.2, while the mean size of household for the group of talaka is 2.75. This range represents the difference between the nuclear family of Geidam talaka, who have but one wife and very few children, and the household of a wealthy trader, with several wives, children and a large yal.

## [GEIDAM]

G. Social Stratification in Geldam.

56 Social stratification in Geldam may be viewed in terms  
 178 of the interaction of three sets of variables. These are:  
 177 the traditional Kanuri system of social stratification; the  
 369 social structure of an urban community; and the influences  
 on Kanuri culture brought about by contact with the Industrial  
 West.

## 1. The traditional stratification system in Geldam.

- 565 Aristocracy in Geldam is represented by a handful of  
 individuals. However, though they are few they occupy the  
 [591] positions of greatest power in the community. The term aris-  
 tocrat properly refers only to Yerima Mustapha, the Ajia, for  
 only he holds a noble title granted him by the Shehu. How-  
 ever, Alkali Baba Kura, the son of a chief Imam and himself  
 a powerful figure in the Judiciary, and Sidi Momo<sup>n</sup> Yerima's  
 nephew and an NA messenger in Geldam, must also be considered  
 to belong to the aristocracy, particularly in view of their  
 close ties through kinship with members of the aristocracy.  
 Kinship links to the aristocracy, however, are an ambiguous  
 criterion, since kinship is not always the determining factor  
 in succession. Moreover, a number of other individuals in  
 Geldam, particularly among the NA Malams, are also able to  
 trace ties of kinship to the aristocracy.

567 Slaves are a distinctive social element in the community  
 only if their masters, too, are present as members of the com-

**[GEIDAM]**

567 status of slave therefore does not really exist as an important determinant in defining the place of these people within the Geidam community structure.

- 565 In terms of the traditional stratification system, most of the people of Geidam are talaka, neither aristocracy nor slaves.

2. Urban Social Structure.

463 The second variable, urban social structure, is much more  
367 important in defining social stratification in Geidam. Most  
565 Geidamites are specialists of one sort or another. In contrast to the village farming population, most of the people of Geidam make a living by practicing some special skill. They are middlemen in trade, craftsmen, religious specialists and bureaucrats in the political system. It is primarily this differentiation which defines the community as an urban community.

463 One might divide the various specialties found in the  
565 community of Geidam in a number of ways. Specialties requiring manual skills might be contrasted with those requiring intellectual abilities; specialties requiring long periods of training might be grouped and compared with those requiring only a little specialized training. The approach adopted here in dividing the various specialists in the Geidam community into groups which might be compared is to look at the sphere of culture with which each of these groups of specialists is concerned. Thus there are several groups of specialists in

## [BEIDAM]

- 219 -

463 Geldam whose activities fall primarily in the economic sphere  
• 565 of Kanuri culture. The activities of other specialists are concerned largely with the political sphere of Kanuri culture. Still others specialize in the religious sphere of their culture. Though the distinctions are never absolute, and in a sense all individuals are involved in every aspect of their culture, it is clear that, for example, one group is more concerned with the economic aspects of their culture than with the religious aspects, as they carry out the behavior which characterizes that group. Though all traders pray (along with everyone else), their activities as traders are primarily concerned with economics and not with religion; though all Malams handle currency (along with everyone else), their activities as Malams are primarily concerned with religion. For any given individual, group membership is operationally defined by the amount of time which he devotes to a given type of activity. Thus the craftsman spends most of his time at his craft, the trader spends his time trading, and the Koranic Malam studies and teaches the Koran.

## 3. The Influence of Contact with the Industrial West.

56 The third variable which must be considered in looking  
177 at social stratification in Geldam is the influence of con-  
[559] tact with the Industrial West. In discussing this factor it is necessary to look once again at the dimensions which determine social position in Kanuri culture: power, wealth,

**[GEIDAM]**

56  
177 prestige, and the distinction between slave and free-born.  
[354]

177 The direct influence of the British colonial administra-  
567 tion has removed the legal support behind the master-slave  
• 565 relationship, so that slaves can no longer be bought and sold,  
648 and slaves who have run away cannot be forcibly returned to  
their masters by the police. This has radically altered the  
relation between master and slave, so that the distinction  
between slave and free-born is significant only in special  
cases.

64 By and large, the colonial administration, because of  
177 its policy of indirect rule, has allowed political power to  
178 remain in the hands of the same segments of the society as  
565 previously held power. However, some changes have been made  
by the British, so that representatives are elected to a North-

634 ern House of Assembly and to a Federal Legislature. In Geidam,  
177 political power is largely in the hands of the Ajia, who typ-  
178 ifies the aristocracy. Yerima Mustapha as Ajia of Geidam is  
565 a perfect example of the aristocrat who has skillfully adapt-  
ed to the changes demanded of a present-day Ajia, and at the  
same time has succeeded in perpetuating the old social order.

Other positions of power such as those of the Lowans, are held  
by men faithful to him, chosen from his kabuna, another tra-  
ditional group which has continued on into the present in Gei-  
dam. The position of Alkali in Geidam is held by still another  
[648] member of the aristocracy; and what is more, the Alkali of  
Geidam, Alkali Baba Kura, was elected representative to the

**[GEIDAM]**

634 Northern House of Assembly. An elected office created by the  
177 British which is an important new source of power has been  
178 successfully captured by a member of the old aristocracy which  
• 565 previously held all political power. Other new offices cre-  
[648] ated by the colonial administration are to be found in the  
634 District and Town Councils. Thus far, the District and Town  
632 Councils in Geidam are dominated by the Ajia. But the member-  
177 ship of the Town Council in particular is largely composed of  
178 wealthy traders and a few craftsmen, who are all talaka. These  
565 talaka do not yet have real political power but they have more  
665 symbolic power than talaka have ever had before, and their po-  
648 sitions may in time give them real power. The same is also  
true for the officers of the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC)  
in Geidam, who are also talaka and controlled by the Ajia, but  
who may in time emerge with real power through their positions  
within the dominant political party in Bornu and in Northern  
Nigeria. As yet, rival political parties in the North, the  
Northern Elements Peoples Union (NEPU) and the Bornu Youth  
Movement (BYM), have been effective only in large cities like  
Maiduguri. They have made little impression in Geidam.

439 Perhaps the greatest changes in community structure have  
177 been those brought about by influences of the Industrial West  
433 on trade, particularly on external trade. Though trade has  
always been important in Kanuri culture and middlemen in trade  
have always existed as specialists in Kanuri cities, it is  
probable that a larger proportion of the total economy is de-

**[GEIDAM]**

Western education are few in number, they form a significant category in the community. In their most advanced form they are represented by the class of NA Malams, who are best categorized as a group which functions primarily as part of the political structure. Since traditional formal education was entirely in the hands of the Koranic Malams, this area of influence affects them most directly. Learning in Kanuri culture has always been associated with prestige, and the most learned people were also among the most respected. This is true for Koranic Malams, and is also true, to an extent, for those who receive a Western education since they, too, are referred to as "Malam." As a result of this, a conflict has arisen concerning the two forms of education, and the relative merits of each. However, since Western-educated individuals who continue their education and receive specialized training tend to accept NA positions--so that the best educated individuals in Geidam are all NA Malams--the primary activities of Western-educated Kanuri are associated with the political system. Therefore they are not in conflict with those, such as the scholars of the Koran, who are concerned primarily with religion. Rather, they threaten individuals who, through traditional associations, are involved in the political system but have received little or no Western education.

It is evident from the above discussion that contact with the Western world has created new paths to wealth, power, and

**[GEIDAM]**

177 prestige in addition to those previously available in Kanuri  
178 culture, and that these new paths are sometimes in conflict  
554 with the traditional paths. These conflicts in turn have  
• 565 brought about shifts in the relative positions of certain  
groups in the community structure, particularly among the  
talaka. The position of these groups in relation to one an-  
other in the community of Geidam represents the social struc-  
56 ture of Geidam. The social structure of Geidam, then, is a  
178 result of the interaction of the three variables discussed  
369 here: the traditional system of social stratification, the  
177 urban nature of the community, and the influences upon it of  
the Industrial West.

124 structure as described in the closing section of the previous chapter.

They are as follows:

- 124  
• 565  
463 1. Aristocracy - a small social group, functioning largely within the area of political organization. Five members of this group were chosen for study.
- [792] 2. Koranic Malams - a social category, functioning largely within the area of religion. Some internal structuring occurs within this category. Three members were chosen for study.
- [441] 3. Canteen Traders - a social category, functioning largely within the area of economics. Six members of this category were chosen for study.
- [634] 4. NA Malams - a social category, but since it is small in size and because its members, having much in common, tend to interact, it has certain group characteristics. It functions largely in the area of political organization. Six members of this category were chosen for study.
- [634] 5. Kabuna - a social group functioning largely within the area of political organization. Six members of this group were chosen for study.
6. Craftsmen - a large social category, encompassing many types of craft specialists who form groups within the general category. The craftsmen function largely in the area of economics. Six members were chosen for study.
7. Talawa - an extremely large and heterogeneous social cate-

124

• 565  
463

gory, including many sorts of individuals, but limited here to those who are not full-time specialists, yet perform some non-skilled activity in addition to farming. Eight members of this category were chosen for study.

[554]<sup>8</sup>

Low-status Individuals - a social category made up of specialists who traditionally have a low status in Kanuri culture. These are full-time specialists, who usually learn their specialty from their fathers. Four members of this category were chosen for study.

124

The forty-four individuals in the eight groups and categories who make up the sample for the present study are found listed in Table XIII. Though it would have been desirable to have chosen the individuals making up the sample through some randomizing method, which would have eliminated the possibility of the selection of informants who are good examples of the author's thesis, this was not possible because of the conditions

125

of field work. As will be explained in the following section, data on acculturation was obtained from each of these forty-four informants through a long questionnaire which took two hours to administer and which included a number of questions dealing

124

with sensitive topics. It was necessary to establish close relations with each of the forty-four individuals included in the present study before he could be used as an informant. This eliminated the possibility of choosing informants in a random way. It may be added, however, that the author was well aware of this problem at the time that the study was done. He consciously tried to handle the problem of bias by selecting as informants individuals who were good examples of the group or

Table XIII

List of Individuals Making up the Sample

|       |                            |                             |                                                                                      |
|-------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 115   | 1. <u>Aristocracy:</u>     | Yerima Mustapha-            | Ajia of Geidam.                                                                      |
| 565   | (6)                        | Lowan Ashek-                | A Lowan of Geidam.                                                                   |
| 463   |                            | Lowan Kagu-                 | A former Lowan of Geidam.                                                            |
| 551   |                            | Malam Jalo-                 | An NA appointee in charge of the ferry; had been offered a Lowanship but refused it. |
| 124   |                            | Sidi Momon-                 | Nephew of Yerima; an NA Messenger.                                                   |
| [792] | 2. <u>Koranic Malams:</u>  |                             |                                                                                      |
|       | (3)                        | Liman Bashir-               | Liman Zomabe of Geidam (leads Friday prayers).                                       |
|       |                            | Liman Habib-                | Liman Ngumeribe of Geidam (leads prayers on religious holidays).                     |
|       |                            | Malam Baba Gonyi-           | a Malam attached to Yerima's household.                                              |
| [441] | 3. <u>Canteen Traders:</u> |                             |                                                                                      |
|       | (6)                        | Alhaji Malam Modu Karabima- | a dealer in hides and skins who buys for a European trading company.                 |
|       |                            | Malam Momon Gordo-          | operator of a canteen dealing in cloth.                                              |
|       |                            | Alhaji Amadu Kolon-         | operator of a canteen, and a dealer in groundnuts.                                   |
|       |                            | Alhaji Abacha Modu-         | operator of a canteen, and a dealer in groundnuts.                                   |
|       |                            | Alhaji Bukar Dan Alkali-    | a dealer in kola nuts and cattle.                                                    |
|       |                            | Alhaji Shetima-             | operator of a canteen, and a dealer in groundnuts.                                   |
| [634] | 4. <u>NA Malams:</u>       |                             |                                                                                      |
|       | (6)                        | Malam Ali Mandara-          | Chief Scribe of Geidam.                                                              |
|       |                            | Malam Bulama-               | Treasurer of Geidam.                                                                 |
|       |                            | Malam Kasem-                | Veterinary official.                                                                 |
|       |                            | Malam Maidugu-              | Head-master of the primary school in Geidam.                                         |
|       |                            | Malam Ali Malami-           | Dispenser.                                                                           |
|       |                            | Malam Bulama-               | Agricultural expert.                                                                 |

Table XIII (continued)

115

565

463

551

124

[634]

5. Kabuna:  
(6)

|                 |                                             |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Wakil Guloma-   | one of the important kabuna.                |
| Bukar Gubio-    | a minor kabuna.                             |
| Grema, Momon-   | a young kabuna of intermediary rank.        |
| Wakil Ali Geje- | Yerima's assistant; head of all the kabuna. |
| Bukar Bultuawu- | a minor kabuna.                             |
| Kengadi-        | one of the important kabuna.                |

6. Craftsmen:  
(6)

|                      |                               |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Malam Chiari         |                               |
| Katima-              | a house builder and repairer. |
| Kazela Modu Katima-  | a house builder and repairer. |
| Mastapha Alima-      | a dyer.                       |
| Malam Modu Kolidama- | a leather-worker.             |
| Modu Kolidama        |                               |
| (the younger)-       | a leather-worker.             |
| Bukar Wanzama-       | a barber.                     |

7. Talaka:  
(8)

|                   |                                                                |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Adamu-            | a tabarma who sells in the market-place.                       |
| Momadu Farashama- | a sewer of horse-blankets sold in the market-place.            |
| Malam Shani-      | a laborer who works for one of the European trading companies. |
| Malam Gumbo-      | a seller of gowns in the market-place.                         |
| Tijani-           | a fatkema who sells in the market-place.                       |
| Ali Goroma-       | a retail seller of kola nuts in the market-place.              |
| Lowan Limami-     | a low level retainer of the Ajia's who does not have a horse.  |
| Baba Mainta-      | a dealer in almost anything for a commission.                  |

- 340 -

**[GEIDAN]**

\*177 when traveling. One item discussed in the text, occupations  
128 in which individuals wish to be engaged (Table XXXII), could not be included in the acculturation profiles as the answers to that question did not permit expression as simple percentages.

121 Several points emerge clearly from a consideration of the  
\*177 acculturation profiles. First of all, it is apparent that some groups are generally more acculturated than other groups--most of their responses fall within the acculturated column. Others are generally unacculturated and their responses cluster in the unacculturated column. Secondly, in no group do we find that all responses, in every behavioral area, are acculturated or unacculturated. Each group has behavioral areas in which it appears most acculturated, others in which it is close to the entire sample, and still others in which it appears unacculturated. Finally, from a comparison of the eight acculturation profiles, one can derive a measure of the relative stability of each group. A stable group is determined by the consistency of responses. A group would be said to be stable when (a) the items within any one behavioral area are consistently in one direction, and (b) the size of the differences between acculturated and unacculturated responses is not very great.

**[128]**

\*177  
• 565 1. Aristocracy. The acculturation profile of the Aristocracy is presented in Table XL. The Aristocracy are obviously an acculturated group on the whole, as almost all of their responses fall on the acculturated side of the baseline. In

- 341 -

## [GEIDAM]

\*177  
• 565 only one area do they clearly reveal themselves as conservative, and that is in the area of treatment of specific diseases (items 24-29). Inconsistencies are revealed within this behavioral area as the responses of the group are acculturated for four items (22, 23, 27, 29) and unacculturated for four others. Most striking is the response of this group to the question of the treatment of smallpox (28), which was discussed earlier. At several other points the Aristocracy appear unacculturated, but the degree is very slight in the case of items 2 and 43. Item 42 may be slightly more significant.

On the whole, the pattern of acculturation of the Aristocracy is that of a relatively stable group. In their one area of marked unacculturation, the explanation would seem to lie in the political implications of the treatment for smallpox. The resistance which the Aristocracy has for Western treatment of smallpox seems to extend to other diseases as well, though in not so severe a form. Yet they are not totally unacculturated in this behavioral area, and thus give inconsistent responses.

\*177  
792 2. Koranic Malams. A note of caution must be introduced in discussing this group. Only three individuals are represented here, and conclusions based on this group are less sure than in other cases. Their acculturation profile is presented in Table XLI. Generally, they are a very unacculturated group. Their conservative responses in certain behavioral areas, those of religious behavior, education, and treatment of disease, are predictable considering the areas with which a Koranic Malam is

(TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 344)

[BEIDAN]

- 342 -

Table XL

## ACCLIMATIZATION PROFILE OF THE ARISTOCRATS

unculturated responsesacculturated responses

1. knowledge of Hausa  
 2. knowledge of English  
 3. other languages  
 4. write in English script  
 5. write in Arabic script
6. has watch  
 7. has bicycle  
 8. has radio  
 9. has photographs  
 10. has horses
11. rides bicycle  
 12. can tell time  
 13. usefulness of watch  
 14. bicycle more useful  
 15. rather own bicycle
16. smoke cigarettes  
 17. drink beer  
 18. wear Eur. shoes  
 19. wear Eur. trousers
20. fast at Iwura Mbale  
 21. wear charms
22. visit Eur. doctor  
 23. prefer Eur. medicine  
 24. Eur.- bone setting  
 25. Eur.- jaundice  
 26. Eur.- snake bite  
 27. Eur.- head ache  
 28. small pox  
 29. Eur.- internal pain
30. would go to court
31. place conditions on charity
32. send son to school  
 33. send son to school  
 34. prefer school to Islam
35. prefer Western occupations  
 36. Western aspirations for son
37. marry a non-Kanuri  
 38. marry a Hausa  
 39. marry a Fulani  
 40. marry a Babur  
 41. marry a Yoruba  
 42. marry an educated woman  
 43. permit wife to work

[GEIDAM]

\*177 missive about allowing their wives to work (43).

463

Not only do the Craftsmen present the fewest number of acculturated responses (6 in all), but in items where they do show themselves to be acculturated the response is not marked. One might therefore say that they are the most stably unacculturated group of all.

\*177

565

7. Talaka. The most striking feature about the Talaka profile is the way in which it remains close to the baseline. The most extreme response is that concerning possession of a horse (10) which is not diagnostic of degree of acculturation. No other response exceeds a value of 32. This is true of no other profile. Excluding the three items that are not indicative of degree of acculturation, 20 items fall on the unacculturated side, and 19 fall on the acculturated side (one is at the mid-point). But for no less than 12 items the response is within a value of 4 from the mid-point--in other words the degree of deviation from the mid-point is of no significance for those items.

The group of Talaka cannot be characterized as generally acculturated or generally unacculturated. They are like the Canteen Operators in this respect, but unlike the canteen operators they are not an inconsistent group. Their responses do not swing wildly from acculturated to unacculturated and within each behavioral area they tend to be consistent. They are unacculturated with respect to language and to the possession of material goods. They are slightly acculturated in their attitudes towards these items, though at no point do they show ex-

(TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 354)

- 353 -

[GEIDAM]

Table XLVI

## ACCUULTURATION PROFILE OF THE TALAMA

unacculturated responsesacculturated responses

- \* 177  
• 565
1. knowledge of Hausa
  2. knowledge of English
  3. other languages
  4. write in English script
  5. write in Arabic script
  6. has watch
  7. has bicycle
  8. has radio
  9. has photographs
  10. has horse
  11. rides bicycle
  12. can tell time
  13. usefulness of watch
  14. bicycle more useful
  15. rather own bicycle
  16. smoke cigarettes
  17. drink beer
  18. wear Eur. shoes
  19. wear Eur. trousers
  20. fast at Yuru Wbole
  21. wear charas
  22. visit Eur. doctor
  23. prefer Eur. medicine
  24. Eur.- bone setting
  25. Eur.- jaundice
  26. Eur.- snake bite
  27. Eur.- head ache
  28. Eur.- small pox
  29. Eur.- internal pain
  30. would go to court
  31. place conditions on charity
  32. send son to school
  33. send son to school
  34. prefer school to Mula
  35. prefer Western occupations
  36. Western aspirations for son
  37. marry a non-Kanuri
  38. marry a Hausa
  39. marry a Fulani
  40. marry a Sabar
  41. marry a Yoruba
  42. marry an educated woman
  43. permit wife to work

- 354 -

## [SEIDAM]

\* 177  
• 565  
tremes of response. They are acculturated in the area of religious behavior. In the area of medicine, they stay close to the baseline for the entire group, though they do show a preference for Western treatment of smallpox. They are consistently conservative with respect to education, and are generally conservative in their attitudes towards marriage. The Talaka are a stable group that is neither very acculturated nor very conservative.

\* 177  
554  
8. Low-status Individuals. The group of Low-status individuals is small and is therefore less reliable than other groups. On the whole they appear to be a generally unacculturated group. The extremity of their responses give them the appearance of an unstable group, though this might have been brought about by their few numbers. Within individual behavioral areas they appear fairly consistent. They appear acculturated in certain items of Western material goods: smoking cigarettes (Item 16), wearing shoes (Item 18). With respect to the treatment of diseases they show a preference for European treatment of 5 of the 6 diseases, though here they seem most inconsistent since they are distinctly unacculturated in their hesitancy to visit a European doctor (Item 22). They also appear quite acculturated in their willingness to allow their wives to work.

Much of their inconsistency and consequently their apparent instability can be explained in terms of their low status in Kanuri society. It is surely this which accounts for their readiness to allow their wives to go out and work as a school-

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 356]

2: Rosman

MS14 Karuri MS14

463

554

• 565

634

[For information on acculturation among varied occupational groups (craftsmen, canteen operators, Koranic malams, NA malams and kabuna) and social groups (aristocracy, talaka and low-status individuals), and their responses to contact with material items of Western culture as well as Western medicine, education, language and occupations, see category 116, pp. 249-327.]

175  
369  
433  
178

the Districts adjacent to the new capital to take turns bringing in (1) to Maiduguri approximately 10 tons of millet per week in excess of the amount usually brought to market. This was to ensure that the expanded urban population might have enough grain available for sale to meet its needs. In a similar but less spectacular manner each District headquarters became an expanded market town when the fief-holders came there to live bringing with them their large following and specialized needs. Thus inadvertently and concomitantly to the political reorganisation which the British carried on, an economic

[565] readjustment was made. The consumptive needs of the large upper class which moved to Maiduguri, and the smaller enclaves of this same class which had moved out to the Districts had to be satisfied. That is to say, new nuclei of consumption were created in the Kanuri state

[491] while others were abandoned or made smaller. Distributive channels of consumption and production developed in response to these changes in the settlement patterns of the non-productive upper class and roads were built connecting the District capital to Maiduguri and linking one District capital to another.

175  
439  
[567] In other aspects of economic activity, the British quite strenuously put down the slave trade and helped promote the growth of (2) trade from Bornu towards the west (Kano) and south. This soon brought the Bornu-Tripoli trade to a sad end, and Bornu's primary source of external trade came from its position in Nigeria and the west coast of Africa. At first, gum arabic and skins formed the major export

- (1) The Annual Report for 1907 gives the figure as 800 sa (one sa is approximately equal to 25 lbs).
- (2) An ex-slave trader in Bornu reported that his last raid had been conducted circa 1921-2. He gave up the trade because of the strong opposition from the European authorities which made the trade lucrative but dangerous.

593 eating together) is dropped and the husband and wife often refer to each other by sibling terms.

593 In some cases, more often among the upper classes, if  
 • 565 a mother and/or father are very young at the time of their first child, a mutual shame-avoidance should obtain between the parents and this child. Informants who knew of this custom (many lower class [842] informants denied its existence) claimed that in such a case the [853] young mother must be pushed and teased into giving her breast to the infant because she feels great shame in having given birth so early in her life. However, as soon as the parents have grown up somewhat and taken their place as adult members of the community, the shame-avoidance between them and their first-born dwindles to the more usual shame-respect held between children and their parents.

571 As indicated above, shame(nungu) is a general category which refers to restrictions on behaviour in interpersonal relations. In this sense it is generalised to include all good, proper [577] and moral conduct, both in and out of the kinship system. An individual should feel some nungu whenever he approaches a woman in [834] public and she should keep her eyes to the ground, her head covered, if possible, and only the most necessary conversation should pass

576 between them. These taboos are more stringently practised by mem- [563] bers of the upper classes, although no man, regardless of class [264] ever eats with a woman. All respect behaviour between the lower classes and their social superiors implies some nungu. Thus in the law court an individual must keep his head uncovered and bent down (a woman keeps her head covered and originally spoke through a window from another room), and remain on his knees with feet tucked under his robe and his knees forward. Or again, shoes must be re-

593

ship developing in the husband-wife relationship depending upon the stability of the union. Such friendships are aided and abetted by cousin marriage as well as by upper class position where the divorce rate does not seem to be as high.

572

156

Finally, an examination of the nature of friendship in general excluding the grandparent-grandchild, and mother-child relations reveals some unique features which arise from its setting in the total social organisation. The question can be raised as to why it is that friendship is not formalised or structured to the same extent as the other behaviours associated with the kinship system. Certainly, an immediate answer lies in the universal nature of this kind of interpersonal relationship, i.e., its affectivity and expressive content, and the concomitant emotional satisfactions which people obtain from such associations. These tend to create a large area for personality characteristics to determine exactly who among the available persons, for example age-mates in the kindred, ego will move toward in expanding and contracting his friendships. As in our society, social factors such as socio-economic status, occupation, residence patterns, ethnic background, and norms of upward mobility all enter into such choices as well. But there is more to Kanuri friendship relations than a mere addition or interaction of these idiosyncratic features of personality attraction and repulsion on the one hand and sociological variables on the other.

572

Informants were forever telling the anthropologist that someone he mentioned was a friend of theirs, although no affective or emotional or for that matter any very real social relationship existed between them. They meant, of course, that they liked

614

origin story, often associating the founder with the Prophet. For example, the following story was related by an informant about the origins of the tira clan:

One day a barber was shaving the Prophet's head. The man made a mistake and cut the Prophet's scalp. Blood came out and the barber drank it. Everyone who comes from that barber is tira. They are not connected with chiefs, they are common people but they are close to the Prophet -- they are sherib, fire will not burn them.

Some informants felt that in the old days there may have been a tendency for clan endogamy, not as a sanctioned custom, but as a matter of mere frequency. No one ever heard of any exogenous rules, or ever connected the clans to any natural species of flora and fauna.

613

614

565

Among some of the high status groups and some of the very high status families of Bornu, not only clan membership is known but also a series of maximal lineages within the clan to which the name of an original founder (not mythical as in the case of the clan) is attached. Most Kanuri have heard of the Sefuwa lineage of the Magumi clan. This was the royal lineage of pre-nineteenth century Bornu. No rules of marriage were elicited for this grouping.

614

829

Questions about clan to younger Kanuri and even older ones in some cases often brought out (after tribal affiliation) residential associations. Thus, a peasant informant would relate how his daughter had been married to a man whose clan was Kanuri. Continued questioning on the same point would bring out the reply that the son-in-law's sub-clan was Maiduguri; in other words, the name of his town.

613

614

121

On the basis of this data, it is concluded that Kanuri clans and maximal lineages have very little, if any, functioning significance in the contemporary society.

581  
429 economic subordinates more closely to the exercise of his power and authority. In cases where this is less of a consideration (e.g. in marriages between peasant households) than the sheer economic benefit of the marriage to the luwali becomes the primary determinant in the decision. Among peasants it is not considered desirable to marry with traditionally regarded low status persons (male or female speaking) such as drummers-entertainers, slaves, butchers, blacksmiths, tanners, petty brokers, or anyone whose birth is considered illegitimate. (conceived out [848] of wedlock). This results in a certain amount of endogamy among these occupation groups excluding illegitimates who are pariahs in the eyes of all.

582 Kanuri marriages are governed by the following rules of incest.. Marriages with parents or their siblings, own full or half siblings are forbidden, and this rule carries over to compounds into which ego's parents have remarried where no real biological relationship with ego's parent's new spouse's children obtains. It is culturally prescribed that ego ( a male) may not marry a matrilineal parallel cousin, although several upper class informants felt that this was a custom of the people and not a Muslim ordinance. No marriages of the latter variety were observed during the field research. It is considered wrong (i.e. shameful) to marry wives of consanguinal kin of any generation after they have divorced ego's kin member. No reason was given for this rule, but no exceptions to its practice were observed.

It is considered inappropriate for a man to marry a woman older than himself. But age is known in only a vague general way and most men claim they are married to women younger than themselves.

836  
589 During his adolescence and increasingly so as he grows older, a young man strikes up liaisons with divorced women who are looking for

116.

As a man and woman grow older they demand and are given progressively more independence of choice in all matters including marriage. This is more likely among the peasants. For here second marriages are not as likely to be used as mechanisms for creating, strengthening and maintaining relationship by the girl's luwali to whom it is traditional to return on the occasion of divorce. It is more likely that the upper class woman will come under the power and authority of her luwali in subsequent marriages than the lower class person who is left freer to make her own liaisons. The upper class woman although not in purda during her divorced status must be much more delicate and restrained about her movements. This necessity to maintain an appearance of probity lends itself more easily to the manipulation of the upper class woman by her luwali after her first one or two divorces than does the relative freedom of the lower class woman. Among all classes an extremely young divorcee of under fifteen is almost sure to have little freedom of choice for her second husband, although cases of such early divorce are rare.

During the harvest season (November to February) divorced women (gower) are more serious about trying to pin down one of the temporary liaisons to marriage. Men at this season are similarly inclined but tend to shop around a little before settling on one choice, unless their minds were made up before the harvest season opened. With a few exceptions (notably female) both sexes consider married status desirable and for a man, having two wives is better than having one. The exceptions to this rule are women who are either very attractive to men and thus enjoy themselves economically and sexually as unmarried women, and/or women who refuse to give up their independence for marriage. These factors are often related and as we shall see there is room for the expression of all of them within marriage. Men marry if their harvest

582  
[561]  
587  
565  
557

[589]

581  
[585]  
[221]

[595]

[589]

581 than high ranking men, if they had to choose between these two attributes  
581 in a husband. This type of distinction was more easily elicited from  
369 urban persons or upper class informants than from rural peasants, who only  
565 discuss such a question in a fantasy-like conversation which many are not  
willing to do. Lower class informants in the rural areas often refused  
to consider questions about whether they would like to marry wealth or  
rank answering only "andi tala" (we are peasants or commoners).

581 Crosscutting the foregoing classification of marriage with  
virgins or non-virgins are several subclassifications which describe in  
a somewhat sharper fashion the nature of the relationships involved in  
the contraction of the marriage.

581 According to custom any variety of marriage may be a nyia  
593 hulle, a marriage of seclusion or partial seclusion. In practice, this  
565 kind of marriage is almost totally restricted to the upper classes and  
usually implies only a partial seclusion. The woman may go out to visit  
under cover of darkness and escorted, or may even go out of the compound  
during the day, again escorted, for some very special reason such as a  
rite de passage ceremony which she is obligated to attend. One very high  
ranking District Head claimed that his senior wife, who had been married  
to him for many years, had never been out of his compound except when he  
changed Districts, and once when he had arranged an escorted trip to  
Mecca for her.

Women of this kind are exempt from any of the ordinary wifely  
duties which take them beyond the compound walls, such as getting water  
at a public well, or helping on the farm, etc. It is no wonder then  
that such marriages are almost totally restricted to the households of  
the higher ranks of society. No man wishes his wife to be seen exces-  
sively in public. However it is only the rich and powerful who can afford

581  
593  
● 565

the luxury of female seclusion to the degree that their wives' only functions are sexual intercourse, raising children, and preparing food. Generally speaking women value the higher status conferred by such marriages. However one woman in Magumeri felt that she had very little social life and complained of loneliness. She claimed that a secluded marriage in the city is preferable because there are more women of her class to visit her and more special events for her to attend.

582

The Kanuri practise preferential cousin marriage (nyia durbe.). Such unions are possible with the offspring of father's brothers and sisters, and mother's brothers. Interview material and genealogical data indicate that roughly 1/4 of all males questioned have married a cousin at some time. However most males marry from three to six times during their lives which reduces the incidence to about 1/20 of all marriages contracted. No person questioned had ever married more than one of his available cousins. Most of these were older men between the ages of 45 and 60, although two younger unmarried males stated that they intended to marry a cousin.<sup>(1)</sup>

582  
565  
596

For the most part the older men who had practised preferential marriage were either upper class members or connected to patrilocal extended family groupings with fairly long associations to the household unit in which they lived. Although they could not give the names of their third and fourth ascendant generation members, long since dead, they knew that these had lived in this same place. The evidence therefore points to a higher incidence of cousin marriage in relation to upper class status and settled patrilocal family life in one locality.

(1) Both of these men married in 1957, one to the expected cousin, the other to a high ranking official's daughter. The one who married his cousin had a higher social status to begin with than the one who did not.

582 For example, in 1930 the District Head of Mobber, who was in grave dan-  
 557 ger of being dismissed from his position by the British, contracted a  
 marriage with a daughter of the Waziri of Bormu. <sup>(1)</sup> This was his own way,  
 the Kanuri way, of attempting to strengthen his waning political posi-  
 tion in the State. He felt that a marriage link between himself and  
 the household of the Waziri would make it more difficult for the higher  
 powers to dispose of him, and would enlist the aid of the Waziri, the  
 second most powerful man in the Kanuri political organization, on his  
 [648] behalf. The British administration, however, did not take into account  
<sup>(2)</sup> the feelings of fathers-in-law for sons-in-law when judging political  
 performance, and so the manoeuvre was in the end to no avail.

The nyia kam rukatabe can also refer to a marriage which is  
 initiated purely for the sake of marrying a woman or a girl, whose  
 attachment to ego will obviously profit him economically. She is often  
 wealthy herself, or is a wealthy heiress. Thus a high ranking person  
 was observed to spend a great deal of money (this might almost be termed  
 an "investment") for a virgin girl who was the only heir of a rich old  
 man of lower social rank to himself. Informants described this as a  
 true nyia kam rukatabe (marriage with a rich man's girl).

582 By their very nature marriages of this variety are more com-  
 587 monly of the virgin type. However, young girls who divorce and return  
 557 to the households of their luwali, as tradition prescribes, very often  
 565 can be utilized for such marriages in their second or possibly even  
 third unions. . Since high ranking women are more often in seclusion  
 there is a greater probability that successive dispensations after div-

(1) See above; chap. III.

(2) The official records do not give the actual biological linkage  
 of the girl to the Waziri, and it is therefore impossible to tell  
 what kind of a ward she was in the Waziri's household.

123.

582  
 587 orces can be made of them, since they more often feel compelled to  
 557 return to the partial seclusion of their luwali's compound, especially  
 565 during their younger years. Consequently, those in higher ranks not  
 only command higher prices for the girls they dispense, both materially  
 and in terms of social obligations, but get more chance to dispense the  
 same girl, given the high divorce rate. The lower class girl very often  
 wants much more freedom in her marriage choices after her first divorce  
 than the high ranking woman. Thus class differences make for a higher  
 proportion of "investment material" (i.e. dispensable women) for creat-  
 ing obligations where they are needed most, among the upper ranks of  
 society. It should also be remembered that upper class households tend  
 to be larger and thus in both absolute numerical as well as in terms of  
 more utilization being made of the same girl, the high status individual  
 can obtain "higher returns" (more obligations and relationships) from  
 his rights of dispensation.

582  
 793  
 583  
 (1)  
Nyia sada'abe - marriage of charity or gift marriage is sim-  
 ilar in many respects to the foregoing except that the person receiving  
 the girl or young woman (more often a virgin girl) is always a mallam  
 (Koranic teacher-priest). Informants claim that such a marriage is con-  
 sidered to be a charitable act (sada'a) and confers honour upon the  
 donor. In such cases much, if not all, of the gift giving by the male  
 to the girl and her kin before the marriage is waived, except that in  
 connection with the formalizing ceremony on the day of marriage. To what  
 extent the bridewealth is excluded varies from case to case depending  
 upon the wealth or poverty, and power of the mallam in question, and

(1) c.f. Ellison, R.E. op. cit. He calls this nyia mallambe - a marriage  
 with a mallam. This expression was heard, although informants  
 preferred the term used here.

3. Length of Marriage

593

The longer a couple remain together, the greater the intimacy that grows up between them. Marriages that often begin with the male in the dominant role, leave gradually with the years. The woman comes to know more and more of her husband's hopes, fears, ambitions, sorrows, and responsibilities. As this occurs she assumes more and more of the role of trusted friend and partner to his decision making, and finally a point may be reached where the man will admit confidentially that he would not make any major decision without consulting this particular wife, because she is so used to sharing in his life that she would be hurt and angry if not consulted. After a very long period of such a partnership, a man who makes a decision against his wife's judgment, usually has quite a battle on his hands.

593

592

602

With the longer term of residence in the husband's compound and the birth of children, especially sons who will continue the patrilineage into the next generation and maintain the household and their mother in her old age, the wife slowly begins to shift her primary affiliations from her own agnatic group over onto the household organization of her husband. Along with this shift the husband's agnatic group, especially the son (s), feel that the household organization includes as a primary senior participant, their mother who by formal definition is, of course, an affinal relation in the household, but who through long years of residence in the compound of her husband, has come to be identified as one of its basic, stable, human components.

593

• [565]

[595]

This variety of long term marriage is more common among the upper ranks of society where more women tend to remain longer with their husbands, than among the peasant classes. Usually only one wife is involved, even if there are others. This is often accompanied by a

593 This is often accompanied by a  
595 more rapid turnover in other wives who tend to resent the close re-  
586 lationship of the longer term wife with the common husband.

#### 4. Status of Wife's Family

593 Among marriages where the woman or girl has come from a  
565 higher ranking family than the man's, the woman has a potential lever  
which she may use to ameliorate male dominance. She realizes that her  
husband's connection to her family is one of the foundations of his  
social status and ease of divorce makes her connecting function some-  
[602] what tenuous. On the other hand, her family may be interested in main-  
taining their relationship with her husband, and thus attempt to limit  
her behaviour to a position more in line with cultural ideal of sub-  
missiveness, in order to keep her husband satisfied, as well as honour-  
ing their own positions as givers of not just wives but of "good" wives.

#### 5. Personality Factors

593 Needless to say, the particular personality make-up of the  
156 husband and wife helps determine whether or not the traditional pat-  
tern of male dominance is possible. Fearful, timid, submissive men do  
not make strong, dominating husbands, while independent, strong-willed  
women do not easily become subservient, humble and docile wives. The  
cultural pattern may be reacted to in different ways. It is anxiety  
provoking to those men who fail, or are afraid of being unable to dom-  
inate, while it may serve as an outlet for aggression and hostility on  
the part of disappointed men who have failed elsewhere in their lives.

#### 6. Socio-Economic Status of the Husband

593 As was noted above, a man needs a wife to cook his food and  
557 return hospitality, as well as to provide food for men who have no  
wives, which helps create obligatory relationships for the male. The

593 wife (non-secluded) is also a productive asset in farming activities.

557  
[558] Women are fully aware in every marriage they enter to what extent their

husbands are dependent upon them for the maintenance of their socio-economic status in the community, and are fully prepared at all times to manipulate their husbands, using the threat of easy divorce to

break down his traditional right of domination and assert their independence within the marriage relationship. This obtains in economically low status households where the man has some difficulty in obtaining enough capital to marry. In its extreme form, given a timid

husband with one wife of low status socially and economically, and an independent woman, this variable may create a completely female dominated household. Other men tend to gossip about such marriages speaking

[521]  
[837] of them as ridiculous jokes upon the poor, weak husband and scandalous, shameful behaviour on the part of the wife who usually includes open sexual freedom as a part of her dominant position. When questioned

about such marriages, however, informants adopt a somewhat fatalistic attitude and comment that there is nothing the unfortunate man can do,

since he needs a wife so badly and has not the necessary economic power

[183] available to him to assert his rights. Thus the cultural pattern of male dominance must be supported by real social instruments; if the male's status is overly dependent upon his wife, it becomes almost impossible for the cultural ideal of female subordination to function

593 properly. This is why higher ranking males can expect higher accordance

• 565  
183 with traditional standards on the part of their wives. If they are successful men, then all they wish from their wives is good, proper, ethical conduct, which includes submissiveness. At this level, the married status of the woman requires that she must meet her husband's demands for wifely behaviour or he will get rid of her. The operation

138.

593  
 • 565  
 183 of the above variables make such conformity to cultural patterns extremely difficult among the lower status ranks of the population, i.e., for most of the people.

837  
 562 Closely associated with the above factors, but not directly determinative of male dominance, are the Kanuri patterns of marital fidelity and divorce. Marital chastity is considered an ideal behaviour norm for both men and women, although almost the entire weight of the prescription falls upon the married woman, which is a logical consequence [554] of the cultural ideal of male dominance. Male marital chastity is given only sham acceptance as an ethical standard by most men, except for the most highly moral, such as some religious leaders aspire to, or very respectable judges, or any other person who wishes to set himself up as a paragon of virtue and reap the benefits of status which such a reputation confers. (1)

837  
 836  
 562  
 [595] Men may marry up to four wives in the Maalis world and because there are always sover (divorced women) in Bornu who are available sexually to men, there are a great deal of extra-marital sexual relations by men which for all intents and purposes are culturally sanctioned. In other words, social reality and every day ethical standards give to men such freedom of sexual behaviour at all times whether or not they are married. This holds true for a bachelor, as it does for a man with one, two, three or four wives. On the other hand, a woman is supposed to turn on and off her sexual freedom in and out of marriage. While married, cultural norms prescribe that she make herself

[229] (1) The Kanuri believe that strict adherence to all moral injunctions of their culture is so difficult and so rare that any person actually practicing such a life of complete moral integrity is very "powerful." His sanctity is so great as to render his person actually dangerous; so much so, it is related, that even the clothes of such a man have power to inflict good or evil on others.

58 sada'abe) in which a girl is given to a Kanuri malla also entails the mutual understanding of an obligatory subordination by the malla to the luwali.

Secondly, in marriages of agreement (nyia ardiabe) and discovery (nyia kolatabe), the major arrangements are made between the man and the woman alone without recourse or subordination to a household head. These marriages illustrate the adaptation of marriage arrangements to the realities of Kanuri social life. Given the large population and the high divorce rate it is not possible or feasible for all weddings to function as mechanisms for strengthening and creating superior/subordinate relationships. And so this second variety of marriage arrangement operates because many women, especially as they grow older, are not willing to be pawns used for the purpose of defining relationships between men. By the same token, many men are not willing to become obligated to others through marriage.

593 In the marriage relationship itself, there is a conflict

183 between the subordination that most Kanuri men expect of their wives and what they actually experience. It is held that this conflict is due to the woman's ability to subvert the cultural ideal of male dominance through his dependence upon her for much of his own status in

• [565] the community. This is less true among the upper classes where the  
[586] man is less dependant upon the woman for his status, and at this level there are few divorces.

844 after birth. The birth takes place in a sitting position over a warmed wooden bowl. When the infant arrives it is washed and then continually warmed by the female attendants who heat their hands over [853] a dish of hot coals and then press the body of the child. Almost immediately attempts are made to have the infant feed at the mother's breast. The placenta is buried in the compound with no ceremony.

[782] Men are barred from any direct participation in the actual birth process, but usually pray heavily and/or employ a mallam (Koranic teacher-priest) to pray for the successful outcome of the

846 birth. During the forty-day confinement period there should be no sexual intercourse between spouses. Informants stated that strict [855] adherence to the forty-day confinement rule as well as the sexual taboo may vary among the poorer classes where the woman's economic services are more in demand. However, the first eight days after birth are universally accepted as a time of strict confinement and sexual abstinence.

846  
858 During the first eight days of life the infant is known as fatu (the little kitten) or kusoto gana (the little stranger) and is referred to when necessary in these terms. This is a strong tabu time for the parents, and they must be sure to maintain all cultural prescriptions to ensure the safety of the infant. Hardly any mention is made in public of the new arrival. Even its sex is unknown except by a few close female friends of the mother who are expected [766] to keep the secret. If it dies during this period, the infant does not receive a proper burial, but is unceremoniously interred in the women's section of the compound.

000

On the Friday within the eight-day period, or several

597 population of Bornu. The practice seems more frequent among the upper  
• [565] classes of society where the young child and his growing ability to  
contribute services to the household are a less vital consideration.

[603] As noted in the last chapter the most frequent destination of adop-  
tions is the grandparent and if possible the namesake grandparent. In-  
formants gave, as one reason for this practice, the claim of fondness-  
affection which the grandparent holds for the child, especially when  
there is a namesake relationship between them. Another reason, less  
often reported but still important, is the inability of the young child  
to behave in the culturally prescribed manner to parents. That there  
is some validity to this latter view is indicated by the fact that the  
custom of adoption is not permanent but temporary. It is arranged  
before the birth of the child, begins just before weaning, and ends  
[591] around the time of puberty. That is to say, the child returns to his  
parent's home when he is more able to conform to the social require-  
ments of parent-child, especially father-child relations. Whether  
this is the reason for adoptions is difficult to say, certainly it is  
one effect or result of the custom.

597 In non-grandparent adoptions the person adopting the child  
601 is called by the correct kinship term. If there is no kinship term,  
the male head of the house is generally addressed as Aba (father),  
and referred to in the same way or as Aba njima (father of the house),  
while his wives are addressed and referred to as bawa (Fa-Sis). If  
there is some special relationship, such as a common name between the

597 child and the compound head, the proper term will be used. At all times  
602 during his adoption the child is made aware of his status. He knows  
who his real parents are, whether or not they are alive and well, where  
they live and what they do, and who and what his relations are to other  
people in terms of his real father and mother.

597 people in terms of his real father and mother. The following interview material illustrates these ideas in concrete terms.

[565] I asked Mallam Aba Kiari his opinion of the practice of giving away infants just after they were weaned. He told me that he, himself, had been given away. I asked if this was a good thing. "Oh yes, very, very good," came the reply. He estimated that about four or five out of ten children of the higher ranks of society had been given away after weaning, although he felt that among the peasants the number was much lower because they needed children in their compounds for the help they could give. He had been given to his father's full sister just after he was weaned. This was arranged before he was born. (The informant is the first of two children from the same union). He stayed with his aunt for about nine years, he always called her ba'a (Fa-Sis). Everyone always told him who his own mother and father were; they lived in the same town and he often went to visit them at their compound. He addressed the husband of his father's sister as ba'a or aba (father) but always knew that this man was a stranger to him and his family.

[601] I asked him why he thought it was a good thing to give infants away. He answered that it was a very good thing because — if you have a child or perhaps more than one, then your friend, or brother or sister, who have never been able to have any children, experience the joys of parenthood if they are given yours to raise. You lose nothing by doing this kind of thing, for the child is still yours and knows it. Did he not receive his milk at the breast of your wife? Is he not the result of your own sexual intercourse?

[842] "But most people give their children to its grandparents," I said. "Why is that?"

597  
603 "Ah, because they (grandparents) love the child very much and will be kind and gentle to it. You are a father and the child must have shame and respect for you, but a very small child knows nothing of such things."

597  
571 Whether or not Kanuri adoptions exist for the reasons given by informants, it is certain that they do create, maintain, and strengthen wider social relationships, giving them a solid basis for continuity through time. The links between two residence groups, either in the same kinship system or between different ones, are made concrete and real. The child, by living in intimate contact and having primary social relations both in his biological family and his adoptive family has widened his primary relationships and solidified a definite contin-

888 stay in or near the household of some other relatives including an  
 887 ex-husband whom she will refer to as "brother". Whether or not she  
 • 565 is being supported by a son, an old woman of the lower ranks has an  
 443 accepted role as a gurdama, i.e. a seller of cooked foods, or even  
 acts sometimes as a small retail trader who sits daily in the small  
 stalls around the town, at markets, near wells, and sometimes attends  
 nearby markets. Four old women in Magumeri (one of whom lived com-  
 pletely alone) had each saved or acquired enough capital (two to  
 three pounds) to buy a well for herself, and through the sale of the  
 water obtained a steady source of income. It is not meant to suggest  
 that at some point in time women suddenly decide they are now old and  
 become sellers of cooked food, or petty retailers of uncooked foods,  
 [434] and small sundries. All her life and increasingly so with old age,  
 the peasant woman raises a little extra cash for herself by doing  
 petty trading or obtaining some raw foodstuffs either from her own  
 garden in the compound, or buying it with her own money and preparing  
 it for sale in either the large weekly markets or a small daily market  
 stall. With old age she merely extends this activity into a full-  
 time occupation.

888  
 565 Women from high ranking households remain in the compounds  
 of their sons or relatives who support them. A widow of a high rank-  
 ing man is sometimes supported in his compound by the heir to the

888 house, who may be a brother of the dead man. More commonly she re-  
 565 turns to a household of her consanguinal relatives. Many of these  
 454 upper class women have some capital which started with their dowries,  
 and may have been increased through inheritance and private trade  
 during their lifetimes. The trade is often carried on by intermedi-  
 aries (male servants of the household) due to the high incidence of

- 888 semi-seclusion among upper class women, and expands as the woman grows  
• 565 into old age.  
454

888

In the case of a man, ideally he reaches the golden part of his life in old age. He is respected. His work is carried on by descendants, and his authority and senior position in a patrilocal extended family organization may have expanded to the point where he is the head of group of households, if his sons and junior brothers remain in or near his compound. At extreme age, with the progressive appearance of infirmity, he relinquishes many of his duties, and serves merely as an adviser who is consulted on most major decisions by his subordinates in the compound organization.

888

592

183

[596]

The difficulty in the universal realization of this cultural ideal is its functional dependence upon residence patterns for its development. As we have seen the primary determinants in the structural cohesion of the patrilocal family organization are the elements of power and authority, which the individual householder is able to wield, manipulate and maintain during his active life, in contrast to the total distribution of power and authority in the society.

[565]

Thus, as in many other segments of Kanuri culture, the ideal goals are manifestly more attainable among the upper ranks of society than at the lower levels. However, many peasants, due to some mild good fortune which gives them just a slightly higher proportion of economic and/or political power than their dependants, find themselves approaching old age successfully as heads of patrilocal organizations in which they are the respected senior members. Contrarily, it is also considered good and proper behaviour to maintain a role of loyal subordination to a strong extended household organization. Attachment to a senior in the organization leads to expectations of political and

196.

793 226, arsiyi) and their birth. There are mallams who form part of the  
 • [565] highest ranking status group in the state as well as peasant and beg-  
 gar mallams. Each political leader of any size has his own mallams  
 [693] attached to his organization, as do many powerful men. Since Koranic  
 knowledge is also legal knowledge the judiciary is a specialized,  
 high status sub-group of mallams.

556  
 [565] Beneath the political and religious occupations lie the  
 [441] broad base of peasant or commoner roles, which are differentiated  
 primarily on the basis of material success. Among these occupations  
 it was observed that the role of wealthy trader obtained the highest  
 status. This is due to its being the most lucrative in comparison to  
 all other non-political occupations. Traditionally, the occupation of  
 554  
 829 butcher, blacksmith, tanner, petty broker, and barber are accorded  
 shame (nungu) status in relation to other positions, while drummer-  
 entertainers are also considered low status people who have no proper  
 sense of dignity.

Informants defined shame status of occupations by whether  
 or not it would be shameful for a "decent" free person whose father  
 was a mallam or a political leader to take up the job, aside from rea-  
 sons of economic necessity (knansake) which (allegedly) excuses the  
 role occupant from shame. The reasons given for shame (nungu) occu-  
 (1)  
 pations are as follows:

- [826] (a) butcher - he cuts animals, mallams who do this are bad mallams;  
 he takes life for money; he smells of blood (the Kanuri  
 equate blood closely with life, soul and personal power).  
 (b) blacksmith - they made arms for the enemies of the Prophet.  
 (c) tanner - they smell badly; their work smells unpleasantly; only  
 a man with no proper shame could do such work.

(1) Composite statement from informants.

554  
602  
[56] lower level. A high born, successful chief explained the improper, disreputable behaviour of another chief by claiming that this sort of thing was not surprising behaviour from the son of a slave. At the peasant level, birth status can count as well in raising or lowering an individual in the eyes of his fellows. A man is given higher status because his father is rich or is a powerful Koranic mallam, while it may be whispered of another that his mother was a pagan, or his father was a blacksmith, thus lowering his status in the eyes of others.

• 565  
602  
554 As in most complex stratified societies, birth in Bornu into any one level determines to a large measure what range up or down of status positions an individual is likely to achieve in his lifetime. (1)  
There is a much higher chance that high status positions are occupied by the sons of high status persons rather than the sons of peasants.

[178] Western education and the plethora of jobs opening up is latterly creating a more widely mobile society, but it was British policy at the beginning of the colonial period to educate the sons of chiefs. The advantages of this policy were soon perceived by the leaders of the society.

[271] Consequently, a large proportion of the young western educated group are [369] sons of the traditional political leaders. There is no conflict over this tendency from the rural population, who still do not value western education very highly, although rumblings of resentment are heard in

565 the large urban centre. At the peasant level many of the craft workers 463 in Magumeri, the potters, dyers, blacksmiths, calabash makers and the 602 other craftsmen, are from kin groups that have engaged in these industries "duk" (right back through time), for as long as any of them can remember. However, except for the potters (females) and blacksmiths,

(1) cf. Lipsett, S.M. and Bendix, R., Social Mobility and Occupational Career, American Journal of Sociology Vol. LVII (March 1952) pp. 494-504.

- 565 all the crafts have members who have decided to enter these activities  
 463 during their own lifetime from family backgrounds in which the dry sea-  
 602 son activity has been quite different.

554 On the other side of the question, there has always been room in Bornu for the ambitious climber. Historically, the use of slaves, servants and apprentices, rather than potentially jealous, con-  
 [558] niving relatives in the social, political, and economic organization, has left much room for the discounting of birth status. Moving from one status to another, if it is a better one, is considered a good thing while moving down the status grades is explained as knanstko (literally: hunger pushes him), i.e. he was forced into it by circumstances. Related to this is the Kanuri belief that status, to be pre-  
 [558] served, must be validated. It is not enough to be born the son of a District Head; the individual must prove by his behaviour, both before and after he obtains the status, that he is a good chief, or a good malla, or a good dyer or farmer. If this is not the case, then birth status can be a hollow thing which becomes a means of derision and criticism to be used against a man by his fellows.

In summary, the Kanuri society is not classified neatly by ascribed birth statuses. There are other dimensions of rank which modify and change this biologically given status. Thus birth, although extremely important, is only a rough guide and not a precise measure of a man's status in the social organization at any particular point in time.

#### Wealth

556 The Kanuri differentiate among individuals as to their wealth. This dimension of stratification runs from ngudi (a poor man) to galibu

12! notion of class becomes a somewhat knotty one for the researcher. This is because it lacks the precision of his analytically derived status dimensions and yet it demands discussion, for the very good empirical reason that the people themselves recognize class distinctions. The theoretical answer lies in the nature of the concept of class as distinct from status. Class is a more inclusive category which cuts up an entire society into only a few segments. In so doing it incorporates many of the status dimensions by correlating them into ranges so that all the high statuses of dimensions a, b, c, d, . . . n, are unified into a large segment of the population, while the same thing may occur at other ranges along the status dimensions, giving the society one, two or more classes. When these segments are present, the outward signs such as differentiation in language, dress, manners and other social and cultural characteristics of class membership, become another status dimension to that recognizable membership in any class confers varying status upon the individual. Because of the noticeable sub-cultural differences between class segments, recognizability and imitation often blur the distinction and widen the scope for social mobility. Nevertheless, in order to actually obtain continuous high status in the society, the person must be seen and judged as having high rankings along the dimensions already discussed above. In the following discussion, this theoretical framework can be seen as the process underlying Kanuri class distinctions.

556  
• 565  
829 In the every day life of Bornu, the life spans of different individuals in the population are lived out within differing ranges of experience (which may change through time). This rather abstract statement can easily be explained by an illustration drawn from the judgements made by a young peasant in Magumeri on the subject of wealth. He reported that there were very few wealthy people in Magumeri village itself,

- 556 but that in Gwonyiri, about three-quarters of a mile to the east of  
• 565 Magumeri village, there were at least a dozen "rich" men. When asked  
829  
[434] why they were rich he answered that they had very large farms (about  
fifteen to twenty acres) and made much money from their cash crops.
- [442] One was a wholesale kola nut dealer and sold many (four to six) "packages"  
[465] of nuts (one package equals five to eight thousand nuts) per month. It  
was illuminating in this conversation, in which the young man was asked,  
"What is a rich man?" and, "Who are rich men?", that he had not mention-  
ed the District Head of Magumeri who earns officially seven hundred  
pounds per annum, or any of the well-known rich traders of Bornu who  
live in Maiduguri. When asked whether the rich peasants of Gwonyiri  
were wealthier than the District Head or a rich trader in the city he  
said "att a'l gadigadi" (that is something different) because "sandi  
kam gadi" (they are different people). The District Head is an aristo-  
crat, a man of power, and the rich trader is a kam birni (a city man)  
but "amma andi tala" (we are peasants). That is to say, the informant's  
birth and socialization into the rural peasant sector of Kanuri society  
made his range of judgments along the dimensions of status different  
from that of a chief or a rich trader. Like other informants, his con-  
cept of the status dimension was divided into "my" range, or "our" range,  
and "their" range. Although he knew that the range of statuses along  
any dimension went beyond "our range", he perceived people outside this  
to be "different" and he used the expression "different people" to de-  
scribe them. Yet he certainly recognized that they were of the same eth-  
nic group as himself. When he was first asked about rich people he used

(1) 219.

556 the range of statuses he associated most closely with his own life.

• 565  
829 The differing life experiences of large segments of the population bring about common ranges of experience for the whole segment. Thus rural peasants form one large massive segment which can be called a class.

565 A large number of people in the city feel themselves to be  
369 a part of this lower class segment, the tala or peasants. Certainly the common poverty among them keeps them all within one category of economic  
[166] activity (materially); however, other factors are involved. A large portion of the city population are extremely recent arrivals in the urban  
[103] centres. Bornu cities, of which Maiduguri (or Yewa as it is called in Bornu) is the largest, have grown enormously in the past few decades. This means that most of the people in urban centres are of recent rural  
(2) origin and thus still retain many of the sentiments of their background. This is not meant to contradict the discussion above on the rural/urban. However, it should be remembered that the distinction is extremely var-  
[241] ious and very recent for many people. Another unifying factor is the maintenance of rural farms by city people, who move out, or send out a son or a servant, to cultivate a farm in the bush during the growing season, thus retaining their contact with the rural areas. One of the other

(1) Differing ranges of experience and personal aspirations may cause an expansion of the scale which people refer to. Thus one very ambitious young trader, from a peasant background, who still lived in the bush but was contemplating a move to the city, told the writer immediately, when asked, that Alhassan Dan Tata of Kano (one of the richest men in Nigeria) was a rich man. Nevertheless, lower class bush people generally used a frame of reference more nearly similar to the young peasant above.

[162](2) Population figures for Maiduguri are as follows (see Coleman, J.S., op. cit. p. 74):

| 1921   | 1931   | 1953   |
|--------|--------|--------|
| 16,274 | 24,359 | 54,646 |

Government service personnel in Bornu estimated the population of Maiduguri at 75,000 to 80,000 during the period 1956/57.

- 565 one of the other  
369 common features of the tala or peasant class is the verticality of  
571 their social relations. This is especially true of political affiliations. All rural and most or many urban tala can give an easily elicited answer to the question, "Those tala are you?" The person questioned then tells the name of his Lawan (Village Area Head). Thus tala not only connotes peasant or commoner, it also means someone's peasant, i.e.

[178] under the jurisdiction of some political office holder. The fact that there is in the city a small but growing number of people who do not feel this verticality or connectedness upward in a traditional manner is one of the most profound portents of social change in contemporary Bornu.

565 The tala, rural and urban, have many cultural characteristics  
369 in common. They most often wear a short work shirt (dankiki) during the day, and their conversation is less etiquette ridden and more direct than that of the upper class. Linguistic usages among the tala vary from place to place, but generally involve the dropping of some of the consonantal phonemes. Thus in Magumeri muko (hand) was pronounced muko by the tala. These linguistic differences are considered to be less elegant and correct compared to the speech of the upper class. As in many class societies the speech of the lower classes is coloured by many words which the upper class considers to come within the scope of profanity. Thus a Kanuri tala always sprinkles his friendly conversation with many references to Allah or to "the wonder of Allah", or even occasional exclamatory references to excrement and the excretory functions.

[128] To the upper classes evil deeds are committed by evil men (kan dibi); the same wrongdoer is more often referred to with an epithet like shege! (a bastard) by the tala.

[633] (1) The city is divided into large wards with Lawans as their Head Men and Hamlet Heads (Bulama) as the heads of sub-wards.

- 565 shere! (a bastard) by the tala.

The political office holder from the rank of Lawan (Village Area Head) up the hierarchy are considered "different" in contrast to the tala. Their judgements about occupations, birth status, wealth, etc., move through a different range than those of the lower class. Thus a good house would mean a well-built mud dwelling to a tala, while a kantuoma (an aristocrat, a man of power) would think of a good house as a burnt brick building with electricity. The connection of the kantuoma with the political hierarchy and the utilization of their power, authority and generally higher income make them seem far apart, as a group, from the tala. They dress always in robes, never work shirts, always go abroad from their homes on horseback or in a vehicle, with some retainers, and consider themselves superior to the tala who they administer.

Traditionally these two large segments, the rulers and the commoners they exert power over, formed the two large class segments of Bornu society. Informants relate how in the old days tala wore only dark indigo dyed blue clothes, while the ruling classes wore light coloured gowns. Today this distinction is much less adhered to, especially in urban areas. Nevertheless, out in the rural District Courts, it is still common to see lower class plaintiff, accused, and the witnesses all wearing navy blue gowns while the court officials appear in (44) light blue, green, white and other pale colours. Wealthy traders in the city are allied with the ruling class often serving as their financial backers and sometimes, it is rumoured, buying themselves political jobs. There is no definite sense of separateness on the part of the small wealthy non-ruling group in the city from the social organization as a whole. Their loyalty and respect to the traditional office holders

• 565

222.

is not perceived by them as being in conflict with their lack of direct power and authority in the state.

The result of this coordination of lower statuses into a peasant-commoner class and high statuses into a ruling upper class is the differentiation of Kanuri society into two broad sub-division, that of the upper and the lower classes. Language, wealth, power and authority, occupations, manners and etiquette all differ within these two large divisions. The differences are not, however, either/or distinctions. They can be seen as a large number of recognizable signs which tend to place the person higher or lower on a scale of class attributes. It is at this point that class, or rather its cultural characteristics, become not just a segmentation of society into large units, but a dimension of status. This process occurs through the simulation of class attributes, generally in an upward direction. For in Bornu, the appearance of upper class membership enhances an individual in his own eyes and those of his fellows. <sup>(1)</sup> Thus the acquisition of items of upper class culture, such as large flowing light-coloured robes, or a fine horse, or many supporters and subordinates, or more elegant manners and speech, give a man higher status. But it is the dimensions of social stratification discussed above, rather than these cultural expressions, which are the underlying conditions for status. Thus if a person does not have a high status occupation, or is not of a sedentary Mualim tribe, or possess real wealth that he uses properly, or behave in all the other ways necessary for him to obtain high status, then the acquisition of some items of upper class culture merely constitute some blurring and

[114] (1) Nadel, S.F. A Black Byzantium (1947) and The Concept of Social  
 [17] Elites, UNESCO Bull. of Social Science, Number 8 (1956) has made this same point for Nupe, and on a theoretical level as a characteristic of elites in general, i.e. that they are copied by the rest of the population.

- 565  
[171] levelling processes between the two large segments of the society. It is because of this status aspect of class that Kanuri, like ourselves, have a ludicrous image of the arriviste - the person who has some of the attributes of upper class society, but who can never learn all of them, for he is not "to the manor born".

114  
562 This account of the social organization of Bornu has been heavily weighted towards the male society. This is due admittedly to the primary male associations of the anthropologist. However, it can also be put down to the strongly male-centred framework of the social structure.

554  
562 The dimensions of status discussed above, of tribe, occupation, wealth, birth, rural/urban residence and class, hold as well for women as for men. But for the most part (leaving aside highly independent women, who tend to create their own status) a woman's social position can be more fully understood by tracing her relationship to the various males in her patrilineage, and her married life. Briefly, a woman receives relatively high or low status from three sources, (1) her agnatic descent group and its status in the society, (2) the status of her husband, and (3) her personal wealth. The interrelation of these three factors changes through time for each woman as well as varying from woman to woman, but they are the basis of judgements by self and others which set a woman high or low in the society. It will be noticed that (1) and (2) both refer not to the woman's status, but to that of males to whom she is related either by marriage or descent.

173  
554  
562  
571 It is claimed that traditionally the women in Bornu were more highly organized than at present. There were titled heads to a total association of women, who were organized in similar manner to the

55  
828

makes what power he has work well for him, avoids illness, poverty and derision, or does anything that can be measured in terms of achievement, then the degree of his success is the proof as to how much araiyi (good fortune, personal degree of success) he has in his hal (his nature, his being, his essence). Like Calvinistic pre-determination, araiyi is hoped for before the fact, and indicated or substantiated after the fact, of success.

554  
• 565  
828  
829

In answering questions about araiyi, informants of all classes and ranks are generally agreed that no matter how much success a peasant has with his farm, his wife, at cards, or at his craft work, he can never possibly come close to having as much araiyi as even a bad District Head or Village Area Head. When finer discriminations are asked for, however, disagreements sometime arise. Thus informants when questioned as to who has more araiyi, a trader in the city who recently bought a big truck and has a large compound of wives and followers, or a somewhat effete District Head, they answered according to how they ranked wealth alone as compared to political power. Since both of these dimensions of status are usually congruent when ranked high, the discrimination is often a difficult one. Nevertheless there is, at any one level in the society, a large measure of agreement about the amount of araiyi of the various social roles in the society at any one time. People from different levels of the society give somewhat differing pictures of the distribution of araiyi throughout the society. This results from their different vantage points and therefore differing opportunities for perceiving the social structure. Thus although many lower class people find it difficult to decide whether or not the effete District Head has more araiyi than the rich city trader, those close to the chief, including himself, feel that the rich trader has more.

If the extended household head can maintain the 234.

621  
571 subordination of his followers, then he is on the way to becoming a  
554 "big" man which may eventually mean his attainment of the political  
622 position of Hamlet or ward head (Balama), depending upon the location  
of his settlement. This achieved status is then stabilized through  
the inheritance rules.

#### The Village Area

632 The small village area includes a town cluster of adjoining  
compounds (usually 500-2000 population) and a surrounding group of small  
settlements (Hamlets) in the immediate area. The larger towns are  
broken down into wards, and as we have seen the ward head and the  
hamlet head have the same political status, that of Balama. This is  
due to their similar political roles as local leaders under the Lawan  
633 (Village Area Head). In larger cities such as Maiduguri, Gaidam, or  
Nguru, the "wards" of the city include such large populations that  
their head men receive the title of Lawan. These Lavans in turn have  
Balama under them as heads of sub-ward divisions in their jurisdiction-  
al area.

632  
• [565] In the town of Magumeri, the Lawan has jurisdiction over all  
persons in the Village Area who describe themselves as his peasants.  
This excludes all persons who are directly subordinate to the District  
[651] Head, the Judge, or the N.A. in Maiduguri. Formally he collects a  
Haraji (assessment) tax from everybody except the District Head, but  
in reality, he has little political control over anyone who has function-  
ing attachments to the Bornu N.A.

632 The Lawan acts as his own ward head, of the nguro Lawantari  
621 (the Lawan's ward), and many of the compounds in this ward house the  
followers of Lawan, i.e. the members of his extended household organiza-  
tion. Some of the householders had compounds in this ward long before

634  
647  
661  
631  
hinted at the inefficiency of the Chief Scribe to a touring British officer in 1957. After this alleged interview with the DH, the British officer stated that in his opinion there was "something going on here" and he suspected the Chief Scribe, because of a "shifty eyed look about him". In August 1957 the Chief Scribe was formally informed by the N.A. that he was being transferred to another District, with the understanding that the move was a reprimand. The DH is not free to manoeuvre someone more loyal to himself into the position of District Chief Scribe.  
(1)

634  
647  
571  
In many cases the relationship between N.A. officials in the District and the DH is one of respectful but carefully maintained social distance. The N.A. personnel are usually new to the District and generally desire to move ahead in their own civil service departments. In Magumeri, these N.A. personnel are asked to appear and eat with the DH between two and four times a week. This helps validate their upper class membership as a group apart from the rural population.

- [565]
- (1) The total politics of this manoeuvre are more complicated than this simple outline indicates. The British officer was accompanied by a high placed N.A. official from Maiduguri in order to reprimand the DH for not collecting enough taxes. (The N.A. official later sent word by messenger from the capital apologizing for his own severity on the grounds that he could do nothing else in the presence of the British officer. He also warned the DH to increase his tax deliveries in order to avoid future trouble). For a show of efficiency, as well as to save the DH from the direct blame, it is believed by the local officials that the Chief Scribe was chosen as a scapegoat. Whether or not this is true is impossible to know; however, it is clear from his own statements that the British officer was strongly of the opinion that the Chief Scribe was in league with the DH to mulct the tax revenue, and that the removal of the Scribe would slow down these efforts by the DH. The high placed N.A. official who knew better did nothing to correct this false impression held by the Englishman. And it was this false impression that led to the Chief Scribe's removal from the District. Whether or not the DH and the N.A. official planted the idea in the Englishman's head, or whether they exploited a suspicion already there, still amounts to the same thing - the removal of the Chief Scribe for a "misdemeanour" he did not commit, in order that it might be committed in the future.

000

298.

23/ of transportation besides walking. In the farm survey it was found that  
 511 of seventy-five household heads questioned, about one-half ( forty-five per cent) owned horses and better than half (fifty-nine per cent) owned from one to three donkeys. Horses, besides being modes of conveyance, are prestige objects of value per se, and thus are purchased for this latter purpose as well as their utilitarian value. Thus a man who already owned a horse might trade it for a bigger, a faster, or a more beautiful one, i.e. for a number of non-economic as well as economic reasons.

342

There are four house types in general use in Bornu. Each one is progressively more durable than the other and more expensive. The diagrams on the next page illustrate these types of accommodation. Type "A" is usually replaced and rebuilt every three to four years, while types "B" and "C" may last up to ten years with only minor repairs. In larger towns and among the upper classes generally type "D", a mud-walled edifice with a domed mud roof braced on wooden arches is [178] the predominant variety. Today, burnt brick and cement with corrugated iron roofing is slowly coming in as a desirable building material at the top echelons of society.

511

[356]

With the expansion of numbers in a household, the amount of huts must be increased and replacement costs and depreciation increase proportionately. Compound walls are a similar expense. Zana mat (grass) [351] walls must be replaced every two to three years while mud walls, only need repairs and maintenance after each rainy season, or perhaps after every two if they have been well constructed.

342

476

565

Building is handled in two ways. A common method among the lower strata is for the household head aided by neighbours, friends and relatives to organize a serwa (co-operative work group). The women of

[text continues on p.300]

342 the house often aided by the wives of the serwa participants cook a large  
 476 meal for the men who build the house. Materials are bought by the own-  
 565 er. This method is only practised in the construction of house types  
 342 "A" and "B". Secondly, building with mud is carried out by specialists  
 331 and they must be employed and paid to build the house. However, this  
 565 requirement is not clearcut; specialists are also used to construct house  
 types "A" and "B", especially "B" which is a larger and more complicated  
 variety. The determining variable for the use of specialists is social  
 status. The higher the status of a male householder, the less likely  
 is he to use a serwa and the more likely is he to utilise specialist la-  
 [369] bour. Today in the cities, southern Nigerians, especially Ibo contract-  
 [563] ors, as well as a few Hausa and Kanuri, contract with both the govern-  
 ment and private individuals to build houses using combinations of both  
 traditional and western building techniques and design.

423 Rent is paid in the cities where houses are regularly pur-  
 [427] chased and sold by private persons. In rural areas, in the villages  
 [369] and hamlets, there is no need for house rental, since new housing is  
 cheap and land is not scarce in or near the settlement. Land rights in  
 Bornu are not, however, so simple, for the Kanuri do not operate their  
 system of land tenure under one definite set of rules. The primary  
 criterion for land ownership is usufruct. The land is given to the pea-  
 [425] sant by the political leader of the community. The peasant and his de-  
 scendants hold this property for as long as they maintain its use, giving

423 the feudal leader a tithe every year on the produce. In Magumeri, the  
 632 Lawan (Village Head) has nominal control over all free land within a rad-  
 ius of about three-quarters of a mile from the town. Farms within this  
 circle are called kulo fatobe (compound or "House" farms), while those  
 beyond are called kulo karabe (bush farms). Permission should be sought

602

334.

571 power and authority relations within the organization of each residence

592

groupings. This brings us back to barsum, for where the members of a residence grouping are obtaining the proper receipts for their subservience, their discipline-respect, then no matter what structural cleavages and conflicts are present the organization remains intact. If, however, the subordinates in the residence association see themselves as not receiving enough for their discipline-respect, or envisage more desirable receipts elsewhere, either through independence or a transfer of their subordination, then cleavages in the residence structure emerge and the group splits up.

583

571

The discussion of marriage has served to illustrate Kanuri attitudes and behaviour within contractual relations in which goods and services are exchanged between persons and groups. Bridewealth is given by the man and his group of relatives and friends to the girl and her group. The closer the marriage is to being the woman's first, the more likely it is that her luwali (dispenser of marriage rights) and kin [426] group take the bridewealth payments rather than the woman herself. Men borrow from relatives, friends, and superiors to obtain the money for marriage expenses. Thus a man's social relational network in Bornu is an important part of his capital reserve.

581

The Kanuri classify marriages into two major categories, virgin or first marriage (female speaking) and marriage with a woman who has been married before. Marriages are further sub-divided on the basis of the kinds of relationships established by the wedding. The relationship between the man and woman may entail the seclusion of the wife

581

593

• [565] within the compound (nyia kulle). This is not strictly an either/or category but rather a matter of degree, since all Kanuri men like to see their wives remain in the compound as much as possible. However,

581  
593  
• [565] only the upper classes can afford to maintain and enforce such a relationship. The remaining categories can be regrouped under two headings.

581  
557 Firstly, there are marriages in which a man obtains a wife by virtue of his relationship to an extended household organization and its head. The household head uses his luwali role (and in some cases his influence over other luwali) either to strengthen or create [582] obligatory relationships with other men. In some cases these unions take the form of cousin marriages (nyia durbe). In others, they merely emphasize already existing superior/subordinate relationships, while in still others, they serve as the initiating circumstance for an attempt [583] at such a relationship. As we have seen, gift marriage (nyia sada'abe) in which a girl is given to a Koranic mallam also entails the mutual understanding of an obligatory, subordination by the Mallam to the luwali.

581  
[584] Secondly, in marriages of agreement (nyia ardiabe) and discovery (nyia kolatabe), the major arrangements are made between the man and the woman alone without recourse or subordination to a household head. These marriages illustrate the adaptation of marriage arrangements to the realities of Kanuri social life. Given the large population and the high divorce rate it is not possible of feasible for all weddings to function as mechanisms for strengthening and creating superior-subordinate relationships. And so this second variety of marriage arrangement operates because many women, especially as they grow older, are not willing to be pawns used for the purpose of defining relationships between men. By the same token, many are not willing to become obligated to others through marriage.

593

183

In the marriage relationship itself there is a conflict between what most Kanuri men expect of their wives - that is to say, subordination - and what they actually experience. It is held that this conflict is due to the woman's ability to subvert the cultural ideal of male dominance through his dependence upon her for much of his own status in the community. This is less true among the upper [565] [586] classes where the man is less dependent upon the woman for his status, and at this level there are fewer divorces.

571

The discussion of the Kanuri life cycle along with the material on kinship and marriage has been designed to give a description on interpersonal relations. Although the whole fabric of Kanuri society operates at once, the large scaled structural features of the society are linked behaviourally by these patterns of interpersonal relations. At the level of social stratification, political and economic organization, the organizational patterns of the total society must be seen as operating through and with the modes of interpersonal relations.

561

In the life cycle, we have seen how age statuses are only roughly correlated with the physiological phases of growth, maturity and decline. They are more precisely defined in terms of sequences of skills to be learned and tests to be passed during the lives of individuals.

858

During the first eighteen months of life the infant (tiful) is introduced into the company of its family within the context of Kanuri culture. This period sets in motion the learning experiences which guide the new member into full adult participation in the society. Until the end of the tiful stage the individual is treated gently and permissively, and socialization pressure is at a minimum. The tiful

000 at any particular point in time.

556  
183 People are also ranked in terms of their wealth and the manner in which they use their material resources. There is a conflict between consumption of wealth for subsistence purposes and for the creation and maintenance of social relationships. This is only partially resolved by covert savings because the competition between subsistence needs and the high value placed upon generosity are irreconcilable in practice, given the low standard of living in the area.

369  
554 In the society as a whole, people are differentiated as to whether or not they are rural or urban. This distinction is more sharply made by upper class city dwellers, since lower class urban dwellers have many ties which connect them to the rural areas as well as to the newly expanded cities.

• 565 Lower and higher statuses are generally co-ordinated into two broad segments or classes of the society. These large segments are characterized by many cultural features of dress, language, etiquette, house-type and so on. These features create the possibility of simulation of upper class membership by upwardly aspiring lower class individuals. Individuals can imitate these cultural concomitants to give the impression of more or less membership in a class. And this 'more or less' quality turns the segmentary aspect of class into a status dimension along which people can be ranked.

554  
828  
829 Permeating all of the social stratification and perhaps helping to fuse the various segments is a cultural ideology concerning the nature of success. Kanuri culture contains a theory of society and its causes, all of which is embodied in the concept arsiyi. The theory explains to the people, both the structure of society and mobility

182 But these norms are in turn dependent upon other phenomenon  
 183 in the society. Child training practices and the conditions under  
 571 which they occur teach recruits to the society how to operate in the adult world. The political and economic structure ensure that proper  
 178 harsum relations are rewarded. Changes in these phenomenon will pro-  
 571 duce changes in the overall structure of society, and we have seen cer-  
 [555] tain changes already occurring. Thus western education is becoming more  
 important as a means of upward mobility into the highly ranked civil  
 [156] service and this change in recruitment practices will continue. This  
 is bound to produce personal conflicts for those who are subjected to  
 the conflicting goals and standards of the two systems of socialization,  
 which could manifest itself in a western trained group of reformers  
 setting up pressure for change in the society.

Urbanization which has been increasing in the past twenty  
 years will continue to do so in the near future. Norms of living are  
 expanding to include more goods from the outside world. This is being  
 constantly stimulated by improved channels of communication and trans-  
 portation. The future of the present structure of Kanuri society is  
 clearly dependent upon whether or not its political and economic or-  
 ganization can be maintained in the face of these ongoing changes as  
 they accumulate through time.

178 Another way to think about the stability of Kanuri society  
 • 565 is to consider the possibility of class conflict. If such conflict is  
 578 possible, then a different kind of structure can emerge relative to  
 the present. At the moment it is hierarchical segments which are often  
 in opposition to one another. Class conflict sets up solidary or co-  
 hesive tendencies among horizontal strata of society and results in the  
 opposition of segments containing relatively equal ranks.

Peasants often complained of excess taxation, or bad judicial decisions, or the harshness of some upper class person. Again most peasants when asked about Nigerian independence, thought of the idea as horrendous, for with the British gone they believe that they would be oppressed as of old by the upper class. Does this constitute a "class conflict?" If by "class conflict" is meant an opposition of interests, goals, loyalties of different ranks in society, then there is no "class struggle" in Bornu. The study has shown that there is no total reliance or identification of any whole strata or class horizontally across the society. A man feels friendly and culturally comfortable with his social equals. He also feels socially and psychologically comfortable with his followers, subordinates, kinsmen (if not competitors), close friends, and they with him. A peasant-commoner is not one among the masses of his social equals. He is someone's peasant, i.e. he is ranked in a system of superior/subordinate relationships that link him to a great complex feudal organization which is the State. This means, to use Gluckman's phrase, that the society is "crosslinked" by class and status on the one hand which bring together people of similar goals, rank, class, and wealth; and on the other hand, by feudal chains of superior/subordinate relations that link up individuals into a vertical system of loyalties so that a man's ties are both with his class and with his superiors. It is very difficult to imagine a "class conflict" while this kind of social organization is operating.

However, the analysis allows us to see the conditions of change of the system. If the stability of the social organization depends, as this argument suggests, to a large extent on the cross-linkage of social relationships, then if these cross-links were to end or weaken, serious

conflicts might result either horizontally or vertically depending upon (1) See Gluckman, Max, Custom and Conflict in Africa, Oxford: Blackwell, 1955.

## THE SUCCESS THAT FAILED

23

turn divided into craft work, sales of surplus agricultural products, and a complex middleman trade between markets. There is a large variation in dependence upon the market as against subsistence agriculture for obtaining total income, although some farming is carried on by almost everyone except a few full-time specialists.

The society is stratified, with status based on tribal membership, occupation, birth, age, wealth, and to some extent, urban residence identifications. The people recognize two major class divisions — the upper or ruling class (*Kantuoma*) and the broad base of the peasant class (*tala*), under the autocratic hegemony of the rulers. Rosman (1959) uses eight separate categories of social status in his work on Kanuri acculturation. Cohen (1959) has used status gradients and their inter-relationships to explain social differentiation, upward mobility, and class structure.

The society has a monarch, the Shehu, in his capital city of Maiduguri, and courtly life with nobles, including *Ajia*, or District Heads, who live in their own district capitals as sub-rulers of twenty-one segments of the emirate under the Shehu. District Heads in turn have under their jurisdiction a group of contiguous Village Area units headed by *Lawan* or Village Heads. Under these latter are Hamlet Heads, *Bulama*, in charge of small settlements of contiguous compounds. Peasants call themselves the peasants of such and such a *Lawan*. Today the Native Administration departments have their personnel stationed throughout the districts. Along with the District Head and his followers they form an urban upper class living in the districts throughout the state.

*The Situation*

As part of a general programme of economic development in Northern Nigeria, agricultural research stations have been set up by the government in every province of the region. The results are published in annual reports so that Agricultural Officers may begin introducing new seeds, fertilizers, and even new crops on a wide scale as soon as these improvements are known to be feasible under local conditions.